A Golden Treasury of Persian Poetry

Hadi Hasan

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A Golden Treasury of Persian Poetry

HADI HASAN

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FOREWORD

In writing this brief introduction to "A Golden Treasury of Persian Poems," I have no illusions about my competence as litterateur or literary critic. My only excuse for doing so is that I do not wish to miss this opportunity of paying my tribute to the memory of my dear departed friend, Dr. Hadi Hasan, who left this anthology as the last work of a long career of sound scholarship as well as of paying my homage to Persian poetry which has always been a source of joy and inspiration to me.

Dr. Hadi Hasan was one of the most talented persons I have ever met. Starting his academic career as a teacher of science - a Professor of Botany - he allowed his passionate love of Persian literature, which he may have inherited from his Iranian mother, to pervade and possess his mind, so that he had to go back to the University of Cambridge for higher research in the History of Persian Poetry and become qualified for the post of Professor of Persian which he secured on his return to the Aligarh Muslim University and held almost to the end of his life. His valuable work as a scholar and teacher, his brilliant achievement as an orator, but above all, the paternal love and care which he bestowed on his students won for him universal regard and affection. Though his corporal life has come to an end, yet he continues to live in the minds of his many pupils and friends.

These gems of the poetic art which a connoisseur like the late Dr. Hadi Hasan has selected from the vast treasure of Persian verse, accumulated during a period of over a thousand years, bear witness to the ineffable charm of the poetry of Persia which has bewitched all sensitive minds in the East and West including Goethe, one of the greatest poets and critics of all time. Whatever may be

the authentic analysis and explanation of the magic effect which Persian poetry has exercised on the human mind in every age and every clime, to a simple reader and admirer as I profess to be, it is partly the musical quality of the language made all the more poignant by the happy choice of metre, but mainly the genuine mood of romantic abandon free from affectation and extravagance which has a direct and irresistible appeal to the element of romance present in the mind of every man.

I shall not try the patience of the readers with any further prosaic remarks of mine, but let them immediately partake of the feast of the mind which this anthology of Persian poetry offers.

Zakir Husain

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ḤANẒALAH

Ḥanẓalah of Bādghīs lived at the court of "Abdu'llāh b. Ṭāhir in Khurāsān, 821-841 A.D.

I 1

[To avert the influence of the evil eye, the rue-seed is sprinkled over fire in Īrān]

If my sweetheart is sprinkling the rue-seed on fire that she may not be injured by the evil eye,
Of what use is the fire and rue-seed to her when her mole is the rue-seed and her face itself is fire?

I 2

["I was an assherd," said Aḥmad of Khujistān, "and these two spirited couplets of Ḥanẓalah so moved me to action that I became the Amīr of Khurāsān.]

If lordship lies in the lion's mouth, be bold, take the risk and snatch it away from the lion's mouth.
Either superiority and honour and wealth and rank—or else, like heroes, a death which comes straight in the face.

FĪRŪZ

Fīrūz al Mashriqī who lived at the Ṣaffārid court of Yaʻqūb b. Layth, 861-876 A.D., lives now because of these two couplets.

II

BEHOLD, this strange bird, the arrow—a bird which always preys on life;

A bird to whom the eagle makes a gift of her plumes, thereby to take the eaglet away as the privilege of a guest!

ABŪ SALĪK

Abū Salīk of Gurgān was a contemporary of Fīrūz and is the author of these two "Fragments".

III_1

SHOULDST thou spill thy blood upon the earth, 'twould be better than to lose thy self-respect in the folds of embrace.

Better to worship idols than to worship men: take my advice, listen and act on it.

III_2

WITH lips, a judge; with eye-lashes, a thief—with those lashes thou hast stolen my heart from me.

Thou wantest payment for stealing my heart: whoever saw such a sight—a thief asking payment for thieving?

RŪDAKĪ

Abū 'Abdu'llāh Rūdakī, the father of Persian poetry and the panegyrist of the Sāmānid Prince Naṣr b. Aḥmad died in 329/941. He wrote all forms of Persian Poetry—odes, mathnawīs, lyrics, quatrains and fragments: numerically the verses were 13 lakhs; and in quality so fine that "BRAVO and WELL-DONE is high praise for others," says Daqīqī, "but for Rūdakī it is base ridicule." His lost magnum opus *is the mathnawī,* Kalilah wa Dimnah, *a versified Persian translation of the prose Persian translation of the Arabic translation of the Pahlawī translation of the Indian* Panchatantra *written in Sanskrit. Today about* 200 *genuine verses of Rūdakī have come down to us.*

[From the *Kalilah wa Dimnah*]

IV 1

RIGHT up to the time of Adam no one in the world was ever independent of knowledge.

At all times did men of intelligence, in different tongues,

Pursue knowledge and hold it dear so much so that they inscribed it on stones.

In the breast, knowledge is a lighted lantern; and on thy breast 'tis a coat-of-mail to ward off evil.

IV 2

O thou who art mourning and sorrowing and art quietly shedding tears,

What has gone, is gone; what has come, is come; what has happened has happened; why art thou grieving uselessly?

Dost thou want to control the world and Destiny? Have they ever known control—this world and Destiny?

Don't rave: the world doth not listen to raving. Don't mourn: the world doth not listen to mourning.

Go on mourning till the Day of Resurrection: Canst thou then bring back the Past with thy mourning?

If sorrows have come in battalions to break thy heart 'tis better to call for the bowl of wine and pass it round and break them.

Face the test: 'tis in severe trouble that a man reveals his excellence, superiority and leadership.

IV 3

[Abridged from the complete Ode preserved in the *History of Sīstān* and addressed to Abū Ja'far, Governor of Prince Naṣr b. Aḥmad]

THE mother of wine (the vine-creeper) should be sacrificed and her babies (the grapes) seized and imprisoned—

Even though 'tis not lawful to tear away a baby from his mother's milk and breast.

But these babes should not be plucked, nor crushed nor killed.

Till they have drunk their mother's milk for seven whole months, from the beginning of Ardibihist till the end of *Ābān.*

Then 'twould be proper both by the Secular and Religious Law to put them in a narrow cell and their mother to death.

With this shock the imprisoned babes will remain silent for a whole week.

Then having recovered their senses they will fret and cry with a burning heart.

In paroxysms of grief they will roll on their face; in fits of sorrow they will roll on their back—

(For) a burning fire produces froth and foam but not such foam and froth as a burning heart.

They will foam with anger, like a mad camel; they will froth with anguish, like the devil.

When the fits are over and everything has settled down, the warder removes the dark layer of froth.

(And behold) the bright faces of the babes begin to sparkle like corals and red rubies:

Some dark red like the rubies of Yemen; some light red like the rubies of Badakhshān.

And if you smell them, 'tis like the fragrance of the red rose blended with musk and amber.

And so they remain in the vat till New Year's Day and mid-April—

And then, at midnight, if you uncover the barrel you will behold a miracle: as seen in the barrel, 'tis a disc of the sun;

And as seen in a crystal cup, 'tis a red gem and the palm of Moses.

* * *

From this Fragrant wine the Prince fills a bowl and drinks to the health of his governor of Sijistān:

If thou art a speaker, speak out his virtues, if thou art a writer, write out his praise.

To every man's praise there is a limit—but no limit nor end to his praise!

'Tis no wonder, therefore, if Rūdakı cannot rise to the occasion and speechless and soulless finds himself lying in stupor.

IV 4

[When Naṣr b. Aḥmad seemed likely to prolong his stay indefinitely in Herat, these verses of Rūdakī made him return precipitously to Bukhārā]

The air is wafting the scent of the Oxus stream; the mind is reviving the memory of dear friends left behind.

The sands of the Oxus, with all their harshness, are like Chinese silk beneath our feet.

Behold the greeting of the Oxus; overjoyed at the return of friends, it is leaping up right to the girth of our horses.

O Bukhārā live long and be happy: with a happy heart the Amīr is now hastening to thee.

Bukhārā is the sky and the Amīr is the moon: now is the moon on its way to the sky !

Bukhārā is the garden and the Amīr is the cypress: now is the cypress on its way to the garden!

IV 5

LIVE happily with black-eyed damsels and be happy—for this world is but a delusion and a gust of wind.

What has come should not make us fret; what has gone should not be recalled to mind.

For me, the lady with the curly, musky hair; for me, the moon-faced, fairy born beauty.

Fortunate is he who hath given and eaten: who hath not eaten nor given is the unfortunate one.

Like the passing wind and cloud is this world, alas! Bring the bowl of wine; and what is to be let it be!

IV 6

WHAT gains thee to turn thy face to Mecca when the heart longs for Bukhārā and the idols or Tarāz.

'Tis the Lover's prostration which God wants from thee—not the prostration of prayer.

IV 7

[Threnody on the death of Shahīd]

THE caravan of Shahīd has gone ahead; and mine is getting ready. Think what we have lost: as counted by the two eyes, just one man; as reckoned by the intellect, more than thousands.

IV 8

[To the premier, Abu'l-Faḍl Bal'amī]

PREMIER of the world! The world has become totally dark like the night. Oh for our sake, make the true dawn break!

IV 9

[To the ruler, Naṣr b. Aḥmad]

THOU knowest naught but ascent, art thou a flame? Thou seekest naught but equity, art thou a balance?

IV 10

GRIEVE not at the success of others. How many would be only too happy to be what thou art!

MU'AMMARĪ

Mu'ammarī was a near contemporary of Rūdakī.

V

IF I cannot compete with Rūdakī in wealth, 'tis not because I am inferior to him in the quality of my verse.

Give me a thousandth part of what he obtained from the bounty of kings—and I shall produce verses a thousand times superior to his!

SHAHĪD

Shahīd of Balkh died in 325H/936.

VI 1

If sorrow had smoke as fire has, the world would have remained in perpetual darkness.

Explore the world from one end to the other and you will not find therein a single *wise* man who is happy.

VI 2

I have heard that only that person will obtain paradise who fulfils the needs of the needy!

ABŪ SHUKŪR

From the lost Āfrīn-Nāmah *composed c. 336/947 by Abū Shukūr Balkhī, a contemporary of Rūdakī.*

VII

THOUGH there is nothing more precious than speech, the lower is its value the more unqualified the speaker.

But if a big man delivers a good speech, it gets preserved like a legend.

A ruby of Badakhshān owned by a man in the street sells cheap,

But a garnet taken from the finger of a king becomes a ruby of Badakhshān in the eyes of the collector of curios.

A speech which brings no gain but loss what boots it to thee to make such a speech?

For I have heard that speech has a tongue which can cut sharp like a diamond or a tempered blade.

Speech overthrows the pulpit and the palace: it entices the snake from its hole.

Speech is poison and antidote: at once hot and cold, bitter and sweet, malady and remedy.

A vulgar speech coming from the mouth is like a snake emerging from its lair.

Guard thyself against it for those who are closest to it will it bite them the more quickly.

Try and gain knowledge quickly: it will equip thee with wisdom and exalt thee rapidly.

Not wiser is he who is higher[1]; for higher[2] is he who is wiser.

---

1 *i.e.*, in rank.
2 *i.e.*, in worth.

Dost thou not see how kings stoop down from their thrones to seek guidance from the wise and learned?

For kings, even if long be their life and reign, always remain in need of men of knowledge.[1]

Thou guardest thy wealth against enemies but who guardeth *thee*? That guardian of a guardian is knowledge.

With knowledge a man becomes virtuous; and as a sage has aptly said:

Knowledge offers thee asylum in adversity; and brings thee back to the path when thou goest astray.

[1] "Which is better," asked Nūshīrwān, "wealth or knowledge?" "Knowledge," replied the premier Buzurjmihr. "Then why do men of knowledge seek wealth but men of wealth do not seek knowledge?" "Because," replied the premier, "the men of knowledge because of their knowledge know the value of wealth; but the men of wealth because of their ignorance do not know the value of knowledge."

DAQĪQĪ

Muḥammad Daqīqī was a protege of the Sānnānid Princes Manṣūr and Nūḥ and was murdered c. 369/979. He wrote the first 1,000 *verses of the* S̲h̲āhnāmah *which became afterwards the* magnum opus *of Firdawsī.*

VIII $_1$

WERE Daqīqī to praise him whom Rūdakī, the leader of the arts of speech hath praised, 'twould be like bringing dates to Hajar (carrying coals to Newcastle).

VIII $_2$

HAD this world no night there would'nt have been a (forced) parting for me from her lips.

Had her tresses not been scorpion-like there would'nt have been a scorpion's sting on my soul.

Had she no stars (*i.e.*, teeth) under her lips, the stars would'nt have been my companions (through a sleepless night) till daybreak.

Had she not been made out of loveliness, my soul would'nt have been compounded with her love.

Had I to live without a friend, would that I had never been endowed with life, O God!

FIRDAWSĪ

Ab u'l-Qāsim Ḥasan Firdawsī c. 330-410/941-1019 is the author of the Shāhnāmah *which deals in 60,000 heroic verses with the Legendary and Sāsānian Kings of Persia. Described as monumental, and immortal, the* Shāhnāmah *brought Firdawsī no reward from his patron Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna; but a thousand years later Riḍā Shāh Pahlawī put up over the poet's grave at Tūs a magnificent mausoleum in syenite marble. When the cenotaph wa opened I said to the Shāh: "I had heard that Firdawsī had revived the kings of Persia but today I see a king of Persia revive Firdawsī and how can the evidence of the ear equal the evidence of the eye ?"*

IX [1]

[From Firdawsī's celebrated satire on Sulṭān Maḥmūd]

O world-conquering Maḥmūd, if thou fearest none, at least fear God!

For there have been kings before thee—all of whom were rulers of the earth

Even superior to thee in rank, wealth, troops, throne and crown.

Whichever king is in the bonds of gold is looked upon with contempt by the wise.

What if today the kingdom of the earth be thine, does it behove thee to talk without weighing thy words?

Didst thou not see my keen mind or reckon with my sanguinary blade

That thou shouldst call me an irreligious heretic?[1] I am a male lion and thou didst call me a ram?

[1] Unlike the Sulṭān who was an orthodox Muslim, Firdawsī was a Shī'ah (partison of 'Alī, the 4th Caliph 656-661 A.D.).

Thou didst threaten me (with death) saying, "I shall have thee thrown under the feet of an elephant and thy body crushed like the sands of the Nile."

Does that frighten me when in my illuminated heart I have naught but love for the Prophet and 'Alī?

The world will continue to exist and kings will continue to reign; and with each one of them this message of mine will remain:

"That Firdawsī of Tūs of upright soul did not dedicate the *Shāhnāmah* to Sulṭān Maḥmūd:

He dedicated it to the Prophet and 'Alī, boring many pearls of thought (and speech)."

There has been none in the world to equal Firdawsī: none to equal him in genius—and also misfortune.

For now in my 80th year, at one fell stroke, my hopes have been ruined.

For many years in this fleeting globe I knew no rest: I took much pains in the hope of gains.

Twice thirty thousand sparkling verses of epic poetry I composed: pen-pictures they are

Of the sword, arrow, bow and lasso; of the catapult and the long lance;

Of the hood and coat of mail for the knight, and the trappings of mail for his charger; of deserts and seas and dry river-beds;

Of wolves, lions, elephants and leopards; witches, dragons and crocodiles;

Of the deceit of the demon and the magic of the devil and the cries of redress going up from man to heaven;

Of heroes in battle, of foemen in combat, of knights vaunting and taunting;

Of famous and glorious kings like Tūr, Salm and Afrāsiyāb—

Like Kaykā'ūs, Kay Khusraw and the brazen-bodied (king-maker) Rustam;

Like Dārā son of Dārā, Bahman and Alexander, king of kings;

Like Ardashīr and his son Shāpūr; like Bahrām Gūr and Nūshīrwān the Just.

All these (Pīshdādian, Kayānian and Sāsānian) kings have I described and revived.

For ages they had remained dead and forgotten: now, by my verses, have they come to life.

Like Jesus did I call these dead ones by their names—and they rose from their graves one by one.

I tried to serve thee in such fashion, O king, as to make thee immortal.

Buildings, constructed to remain, are gradually destroyed by rain and heat.

Wherefore with my verses did I lay the basis of a lofty edifice, proof against the ravages of water and wind.

This work will survive the passage of time—and he who is wise will read it and be wiser.

Hadst thou been an impartial judge thou wouldst have deliberated over this work of mine

And admitted that I have done full justice to speech, producing such a masterpiece.

With my poetry I have made the earth a paradise, for the seeds of epic verse were never sown before.

There have been many poets before me; many also are the verses they wrote.

But of these many poets how many ever wrote in such fashion? Aye, not one.

Had the monarch not been niggardly my place now would have been on a throne.

But may an ignoble person never be the custodian of wealth and a noble knight never be in need!

But since nobility was lacking in the Sulṭān's blood there could be no gesture of nobility in his actions.

What I got from the king was the price of a drink: aye, the price of a drink from the vaults of a king!

To exalt the unworthy and entertain hopes from them
Is to lose the clue to your welfare and nurture a serpent in your bosom.

[Grapes cannot be gathered from thorns, nor figs from thistles]

The evil tree will retain its evil nature, even if you plant it in paradise.

And, instead of water, supply its roots with pure honey from Elysian streams.

It will transform all noble substance to itself and bring forth finally a bitter fruit.

If you pass by ambergris-perfumers, your garments will smell as sweet as ambergris.

But if you pass by a charcoal-dealer, nothing will you acquire from him save blackness.

An evil return is not strange from evil people—as blackness is inseparable from night.

Entertain not hopes from the man of ignoble birth; because washing maketh not the Ethiopian white:

[The Ethiopian will not change his skin nor the leopard his spots].

To hope for good from a base-born wretch is to cast dust in your eyes.

Since God has created him as he is, thou wilt not find the key to the mystery of Providence.

Gauge not greatness from mouth-made vows: not equal to half an act are 200 promises.

I have composed these lofty verses, so that the king may be warned in time

Not to harm other poets and be further disgraced by their satires.

IX 2

[On Rūdābah, wife of Zāl]

BEHIND the curtain, there is a damsel whose face is brighter than the sun.

From head to foot she is like ivory: in feature like spring; in stature like the elm.

On her silver shoulders two musk-laden nooses: her hair like unto links of fetters.

Her cheeks like pomegranate flowers; lips like fire; from her silver-bosom there sprout two pomegranate-buds.

Her two eyes like two narcissi in a garden: the eye-lashes have stolen the black of the raven's wing.

Her two eye-brows like bows of Tarāz, painted with musk like the papyrus-bark on bows.

If thou dost desire the moon, there is her face; if thou wouldst inhale musk, there is her fragrance.

Her tresses and locks are like an amber-scented coat-of-mail, links linked with links as one might say.

Her ten fingers are like silver pens, painted and perfumed in a hundred art-patterns.

She is an angel form clothed from head to foot in fragrance, clinging robe and jewellery.

IX 3

[On Tahmineh, wife of Rustam, mother of Suhrāb]

BEHIND the attendant was a moon-faced beauty, shining like the sun and full of fragrance and colour.

Her two eye-brows (were like) bows; her two tresses (like) nooses; in stature like the tall cypress.

The ear-lobes shining like the sun; and ear-drops pendant therefrom.

Her lips of sugar-candy, her tongue of sugar; her mouth set with pearls.

Stars concealed within rubies[1]: thou wouldst think she was the companion to Venus.

Her soul was bright; and pure her mind and body; thou wouldst say there was nothing earthly about her.

IX 4

[Rustam's archery-feat and the death of As͟hkbūs]

RUSTAM shouted: "Ay fellow that dost desire the battle's decision, thy rival has come; move not from thy place."

As͟hkbūs laughed and was amazed; tightened his reins and called to him.

And said with laughter, "What is thy name? Who is to weep over thy headless trunk?"

To him did Rustam reply: "O miserable wretch, why dost thou ask my name in this meeting-place?

Me, my mamma has named "THY DEATH"; the world has made my battle-club thy helmet."

* * *

Rustam rubbed the bow all over with his hand and roared like a roaring panther.

Thereafter to his quiver-belt he moved his hand and selected an arrow of white poplar.

The arrow had a point brilliant like the sheen of metal; and on it were four feathers of the eagle.

Rustam rubbed the C͟hāc͟hī bow with his hand, inserted his thumb in the elk-leather

Made a pillar of the left hand and bent the right; the C͟hāc͟hī bow creaked as it bent.

---

1 The stars are the teeth; and the rubies are the lips.

When the arrow-head came up to the ear, the elk-leather began to squeak.

As soon as the arrow-point lost touch with his fingers, it passed through the backbone of Ashkbūs.

When the arrow hit the breast of Ashkbūs, that very moment the Heavens kissed Rustam's hand.

Fate said, "Receive!" and Death said, "Inflict"; the Heavens said, "Bravo!", and the Angels, "Well-done!"

That very moment Ashkbūs gave up the ghost: thou wouldst say his mother had never borne him.

IX 5

[Rustam's threnody on the death of Siyāwush]

AMONG princes, there was none like Siyāwush so generous, independent and discreet.

Alas for that face, breast and stature; alas for that royal mien of his!

Alas for that famous prince like whom the times will never see another.

On the dais, like spring; in the assembly, the crown of princes; in combat, a lion, tiger and panther; and when his fingers closed on the foe, they were claws!

Now so long as I live I shall fill my heart and mind with vengeance for Siyāwush.

I shall avenge the wrong done to him; I shall hammer the heads of his enemies.

I shall wage war with weeping eyes; I shall set the world aflame like my heart.

I shall lead my troops against Tūrān; I shall seize, burn and destroy.

When the sun rises on the morrow, then I and the mace and the battle-field and Afrāsiyāb.

In such wise shall I beat his head with my heavy mace as blacksmiths beat iron,

So that I may avenge the death of that young prince from that black-souled Turk.

I shall spare neither Tūrān nor Afrāsiyāb; I shall turn the city of Tūrān into a river o'erflowing with blood!

IX 6

[A battle-scene]

WITH the hoofs of horses such dust arose from that wide battle-field that the climes (of the Earth) became six[1] and the Heavens became eight.

Below it sank and up it rose on the day of battle, down to the Fish[2] the stream of blood, up to the moon, the cloud of dust.

On the day of battle that worthy hero with sword, dagger, mace and lasso

Cut, tore, broke and bound, the heads, breasts, legs and hands of his foes.

IX 7

[Firdawsī's last Desire]

O thou Dispenser of Justice, the Creator of the World, the Maker of the land and the sky,

Rekindle for us our Royal Splendour,[3] restore to us our crown of greatness,

---

1 According to Arab geographers, the Earth is divided into 7 Climes; and there are likewise 7 Heavens.

2 "The Earth rests on the horns of a Bull which is supported by a great Fish; and under the Fish is an Ocean....and beyond that the knowledge of man goeth not."

3 The Farr-i-Kayānī or symbolized Divine Right which invested the Legendary Kings of Persia and by virtue of which only members of the House of Sasan could wear the Persian crown.

Bring forth from the land one single son of Irānian stock strong, clear-sighted, noble born

Who with the force of justice and manliness, with sagacity, learning and wisdom

Might revive the glorious names of our ancestors and make Īrān a heaven (once again).

IX 8

FROM feeding on desert lizards and camels' milk so have the affairs of the Arabs prospered

That they long for the empire of the Chosroes. Shame on thee, O circling Heaven, shame.

IX 9

THEY called a meeting to take a *decision:* they assembled talked and *adjourned.*

IX 10

KNOWLEDGE is strength: Knowledge makes the old heart young.

IX 11

[On the vicissitudes of life]

[Famous as Alexander's Bucephalus is Rakhsh, the horse of Rustam Finding Rustam taking his mid-day sleep and the unsaddled horse tied to a tree, Afrāsiyāb (Rustam's great rival) quietly went off with the horse. When with the abandoned saddle on his back, Rustam began searching for his stolen horse, Firdawsī says]

SUCH are the ups and downs of life: now we are on the back of a saddle; now we have a saddle on the back.

'UNSURĪ

Abu'l-Qāsim Ḥasan 'Unṣurī, died c.441/1049 was Sulṭān Maḥmūd's poet-laureate: he wrote fine odes, which exist in the form of a dīwān, and kept the Sulṭān in good humour with his impromptu verses X1-3.

X 1

[On the cut tresses of Azāz, Sulṭān Maḥmūd's page boy. The tresses were cut by the Sulṭān's own order but thereafter the Sulṭān became inconsolable]

WHAT loss hath Beauty sustained if the tresses be clipped? Is this an occasion for getting up and sitting down restlessly?

Call for wine. This is the time for wine-drinking and merry-making—for to trim the cypress is to enhance its beauty!

X 2

[On Sulṭān Maḥmūd's fall from a polo-pony]

O king, did this evil sky which hath bruised thy fair face, ever act with propriety?

If the fault is of the polo-ball strike it with the polo-stick; and if the pony is at fault, give the pony to me. [The Sulṭān gave the pony to the poet.]

X 3

[On the polo-pony's apology]

I mounted the pony to give it a sound thrashing. "But wait and hear my explanation," said the pony:

"I am neither the terrestrial bull to sustain the weight of the WORLD nor am I the fourth sphere to carry the load of the SUN." [The world and the sun both mean Sulṭān Maḥmūd.]

X 4

[On the Sulṭān's liberality]

FORMERLY, who was I in the world and who knew me [though much I wandered in search of service]?

Now, with thy patronage, the position is reversed: I have become stationary (in Ghazna) and it is my name which is always on the move.

X 5

[On the advent of spring]

THE vernal sun is like a flirt with the cloud for its veil: now it is out of the veil; and now it is in.

Day by day the length of the day is increasing like the power of the king; and daily increasing is the bloom of the garden like the fortune of the king.

X 6

[On the tresses playing on the sweetheart's face]

WHO ever saw musk thrown on the face of the moon? Have a glance at my sweetheart's face and see the sight!

GHAḌĀIRĪ

Ghaḍāir was 'Unṣurī's contemporary at the court of Sulṭān Maḥmūd.

XI

[On Sulṭān Maḥmūd's liberality]

'TIS just as well that God, the Giver, the Unique, the Incomparable has not yet created the second world.

For, on the Day of Awards, the Sulṭān would have given away both the worlds and there would have been nothing left which man could ask from the Bounty of God!

* *

FARRUKHĪ

Abu'l-Hasan 'Alī Farrukhī, the court-poet of the Ghaznawid rulers Maḥmūd and Mas'ūd, accompanied Sulṭān Maḥmūd on his famous Somnāth expedition (1025-1026 A.D.) and in the following lines gives precise details, not available from any other source, of the flourishing Indian cities which lay between Multān and Somnāth.

XII

'Tis an insipid oft-told tale, the march of Alexander. Say something new for heard melodies are sweet but those unheard are sweeter.

* * *

Firstly (we came to) the city-fort of *Ludravh* (10 miles north of Jaisalmir) from whose lofty cupolas and battlements the intruder is welcomed with huge blocks of iron and granite.

Strong was the rampart and strong the rampart's battlements; and the defenders of the fort were like intrepid male lions.

Secondly *Chīkudar* (*i.e.*, Chiklodar in Jaisalmir), a fort with subterranean vaults containing boxes of jewellery.

What a hill-fort it was, so lofty that it towered above the stars and looked down upon them as they passed in their course!

Thirdly *Nahrvālah* (now called Patan in the Aḥmadābād District) whose ruler *Bahīm* (Bhīm Rāi) claimed precedence over all the kings of India.

(For) he had 200 war-elephants and a standing army of 100,000 picked troops: 10,000 cavalry and 90,000 infantry.

This big city whose buildings were so grand that their cornices touched the Gemini

Was the wealthy *Rāi Bhīm's* capital and permanent headquarters wherein he lived in all manner of joy born of security.

Fourthly *Mundher* wherein was a wondrous tank which held the spectator spell-bound and set his mind a-thinking:

What a tank whose marvellous construction the more I try the less can I describe!

A huge wide tank from whose waters stood up a thousand small temples, exhibiting the engineer's art in a hundred thousand ways.

These temples were grouped round a large central temple containing an idol of such exquisite beauty that its face looked like the moon and its stature like the cypress.

Fifthly *Devalvārah* (*i.e.*, Delvādā 40 miles east of Somnāth) which like the White Elephant (of Rustam's Haft Khwān) had raised its head to bar all passage.

Its main trees were the Pīpal and the Cocoanut which yields fruit several times a year.

A formidable rampart ran round the city-fort wherein was a whole army of temple-worshippers.

MANŪCHIHRĪ

Abu'l-Najm Aḥmad Manūchihri of Dāmghān is the author of a dīwān *of Odes remarkable for their fluency of expression and originality of concept. He was court-poet of Sulṭān Mas'ūd of Ghaza and died c. 432/1040.*

XIII 1

[On the Grape]

THE Grape is like a musk-coloured woman and her womb is like a musk-holder.

In her womb she bears one Life and three hearts, but these are three pieces of bone.

They say that an animal's life is in its heart. But her heart and her life and her soul are bone.

I never heard that Life has colour, but her life has colour like a tulip in a garden.

Life bears no fragrance, but hers is the fragrance of musk, amber and the Myrabolan.

The grape is black, and like the Moon, and no wonder for blackness is an attribute of the moon-faced.

She has no other fault apart from her pregnancy and she is still a maiden just come of age.

Without a husband she became pregnant, like the daughter of Amran, but this story is far more interesting and entertaining than that.

For by breath Mary became pregnant but this daughter of vine, without lips or breath.

The pregnancy of the daughter of Amran led to (the birth of) a son; the pregnancy of the daughter of vine leads to (the birth of) Life.

That was the soul of the God of all Creation; this wine is the God of all Creation.

Him they seized and drew (to the gallows) and killed; her, they kill and draw (out)—starange! can it be?

He brought back to life but one or two; she brings back all the world.

Life in Death denoted the Holy Ghost; Life in Death denotes her.

The Jews intended to kill Christ; the whole world intends to kill her.

Behold, what loss did He suffer at their hands? And lo, what loss does she suffer?

He attained complete bliss after His trials; she attains complete bliss after hers.

The Heavens became His mansion; but her place is on the hand of kings and ministers.

XIII 2

[On the Candle]

O thou whose soul glitters in the middle of thy forehead, our body is sustained by our soul; thy soul is sustained by thy body.

If not a star, why dost thou not appear save at night? If not a lover, why art thou weeping over thyself.

Thou art a star but thy sky is of wax; thou art a lover but thy beloved is the tray.

Thou wearest thy shirt (*i.e.*, wick) inside thy body: aye everyone weareth his shirt over his body but thou wearest thy body over thy shirt.

When thou diest, fire restores thee to life; when thou fallest ill, beheading is thy cure!

While laughing (*i.e.*, guttering) thou art weeping and this is rare, for thou art thine own lover and thine own beloved.

Thou dost blossom without spring; thou dost fade without autumn; thou dost weep without eyes; thou dost smile without a mouth.

'Tis usual to sleep at night—and for thy sake I am awake at night and asleep by day.

Parted from thee, I am the foe of the sun; united with thee, I am the friend of the dark night.

Both of us are smiling; both are pale; both are melting; both are burning; both are solitary; both, tried and tested.

The flame which I bear in my heart I behold on thy head: what thou hast placed on thy head, its home is in my heart.

Thy face is yellow like the "s̲hanbalīd" which has just blossomed at day break; mine is pale like the "s̲hanbalīd" which hath faded in the meadow.

I have tested all my friends, intimate and casual; not one of them is solicitous; not one of them is true.

Thou art my confidante; thou art ever my friend; thou art my sympathizer; I am thine and thou art mine!

XIII [3]

[On Rhetorics]

[Each couplet contains 30 words and all are monosyllables: 15 nouns in one hemistich and the corresponding 15 imperatives in the other hemistich or *vice versa*]

LOVE, care, mole, tress, face, eyes, down and cheek
Make, s(h)ow, rub, smell, kiss, see, scratch and bite.

* * *

Crush, bind, pull, bring, sow, tear, drink and hide
Hate, love, grief, joy, good, bad, wine and fault.
Give, take, pick, play, bite, taste, go and make
Gold, wine, rose, ball, lip, face, road and fuss.

XIII 4

O world, I have tested thee in every way, thou art a complete deception, a total liability

And were I to test thee a hundred times more, I shall find thee to be just the same, just the same, just the same, just the same.

XIII 5

BEHOLD, how curious is the orange ! 'Tis a hard breast—and elongated and sagging!

NĀṢIR-I-KHUSRAW

The poet-philosopher Mu'īnu'd-Dīn Nāṣir-i-Khusraw 1005—1070 A.D., author of a Dīwān, mathnawīs and prose-works became a convert to the Ismā'īlī creed which lays great emphasis on allegorical or spiritual interpretation, whereof the following is a splendid example. The poet's alternative pen-name is Ḥujjat, i.e., *Proof of Khurāsān.*

XIV 1

[On *Ta'līm*, the doctrine of spiritual interpretation]

WITH gratitude to the Beneficent God for His favours, the pilgrims arrived in all their glory.

They had performed the Greater and Lesser Pilgrimage and had safely returned home.

In that pilgrims' party was a friend of mine, sincere, intimate and kind.

"Tell me," said I, "how you escaped the hazards of that painful and dangerous journey.

During your absence incessant worry has been my constant companion.

Happy I am that you have made the Pilgrimage: (I think) there is none like you in the world.

Now let me know how exactly you paid your respects to that great sanctuary.

When you donned the pilgrim's garb (*aḥrām*) what firm resolve did you make?

Did you render unlawful (*ḥarām*) unto yourself all pleasures save spiritual and divine?"

"No," said he. Then said I: "When you said, '*Here I am*' with reverence and full knowledge of its significance,

Did you hear the Voice of God and give such answer as Moses did?"

"No," said he. Then said I: "When you stood on the top of Mt. *'Arafāt* and were admitted to His audience,

Did the breeze of *Ma'rafat* (Gnosis) play upon you making you an *'Ārif* (Knower of God) and an alien to yourself?"

"No," said he. Then said I: "And when you threw pebbles at the Devil did you also throw stones at the devil within you?

Did you renounce your evil ways? Discard all your vicious acts and habits?"

"No," said he. Then said I: "And when you slaughtered sheep for the sake of the orphan and the captive,

Did you notice the proximity of God and slaughter your own lower, appetitive 'self' first of all?"

"No," said he. Then said I: "And when the significance of Abraham's sacrifice dawned upon you,

Did you truly, sincerely, totally surrender your very '*Self*' to God?"

"No," said he. Then said I: "And when you circumambulated the shrine, making the rounds like an ostrich at his journey's end,

Did you recall the circumambulation of angels round the throne of God?"

"No," said he. Then said I: "And when you ran from the Hill of *Ṣafā* to the Hill of *Marvah* (as required by the rites of the Pilgrimage),

Did you feel the progress of '*Self*' from *purity* (*ṣafā*) to *manliness* (*muruvvah*) making you indifferent to Heaven and Hell?"

"No," said he. Then said I: "And when you had to leave the shrine did your heart split in two with the agony of parting,

And did you bury it in the Holy Place and do you feel now like a *decaying bone*?"

"No," said he, "for what you have just explained to me I never knew before, right or wrong."

"Then, my friend," said I, "you have not performed the Pilgrimage. You never reached the Stage of Self-annihilation:

You went, saw Mecca and returned—having purchased with silver the afflictions of desert-travel.

And if you perform the Pilgrimage again, then act as I have *indoctrinated you* (for religious acts are null and void unless accompanied by corresponding movements of the heart)."

XIV $_2$

[Pride goeth before a Fall]

ONE day an eagle rose from the top of a hill, opened its wings with pride and soared into the sky.

It looked at its straight feathers with admiration and said: "Today the face of the earth lies under my wing.

If I fly upwards, I can go beyond the sun; if I look downwards, I can spot an atom, though it be in the sea;

And if a mosquito moves on a dust-heap, my eye can catch its slightest movement."

Much it boasted and reckoned not with Fate. Behold how this tyrannical sky dealt with it.

Suddenly, from his ambush an expert archer shot at it an arrow, as ordained by Fate and Destiny.

That heart-piercing arrow fell on the eagle's wing and brought it down from the cloud to the earth.

The eagle fell on the ground and rolled like a fish and flapped its wings to right and left.

And much it wondered how such sharpness and swiftness and flight could proceed from a little bit of iron and wood.

Then it looked closely at the arrow and saw there its own plumes and said: "Against whom shall I complain: it is from us what hath come to us."

O Proof (of Khurāsan), banish pride from thy mind: remember the eagle, how it boasted, what it fared.

QAṬRĀN

Abū Manṣūr Qaṭrān of Tabrīz, the protegé of the "Forgotten Rulers" of Adharbāijan, died in 465 H. His dīwān *consists chiefly of odes, the best example being the following* qaṣīdah *on the earthquake which destroyed Tabrīz in 434 H.*

XV 1

[On the earthquake of Tabrīz]

THERE was no city better than Tabrīz in safety, wealth, goodness and beauty.

Everyone was busy and happy with his own occupation—the prince and servant, the army chief, the sage and the patron.

But in half the time the heart can raise a sigh; in half the time the lips can utter a word

God hurled death on the people of Tabrīz and the sky made the wealth of Tabrīz decline.

What was high became low, what was low became high; the hills became dunes (of sand) and the dunes became hills.

The earth cracked, the trees snapped, the waters rose and the hills began to slide.

Many a building there was whose roof touched the sky; and many a tree whose branches reached the moon:

Of that tree nothing was left but a *mass*, of that building nothing was left but a *mess*.

Not a person remained to tell another, "*Dont wail*"; not a person remained to tell another, "*Dōnt weep*".

And if the survivor also survived *wailing*, he became thin like a hair, and if the survivor also survived *weeping* he became bent like a horseshoe.

May God isolate perfection from whatsoever is beautiful in the world, for as soon as perfection is reached, decline sets in.

Of the ladies, and many they were, who were ready to steal my heart; of the men, and many they were, who were ready to steal my ideas,

To whom I was wont to put my questions with abandon, to whom I was wont to give my replies with caution (respectively)—

One group was laid low in death, and one group went crazy with terror.

Today the *dead loss* cannot be assessed but the eye can see that nothing beautiful or valuable remains now in Tabrīz, among persons or buildings.

And though the worst is over, what can be worse than these constant minor tremors—(agents of impending death)?

XV 2

THE Feast of the New Year comes once in the course of a whole year and lasts for a single day; but by seeing thee I have a perpetual Feast: every day is New Year's Day for me.

One day the rose-bush gets laden with roses; but thy cheeks are roses which are always in bloom.

One day can I gather violets in the garden; but thy tresses are violets, growing in thick clusters, all the year round.

For one week only does the narcissus appear in the plains; but those eyes of thine are narcissi which flourish in all seasons of the year.

Nor is the narcissus fresh if it is not yet *awake* (*fully open*); but those dark narcissus-eyes of thine are always fresh, awake or asleep.

The jasmine appears only in spring; but in the hyacinths of thy hair one may *smell* the jasmine night and day.

AZRAQĪ

When exactly Azraqī or his patron Sh̲amsu'd-Dawlah Abu'l-Fawāris Ṭug̲h̲ānsh̲āh, brother of Maliksh̲āh lived and died are unknown. But as Maliksh̲āh reigned from 1073-1092 A.D. Azraqī must have been a contemporary of Nāṣir-i-K̲husraw and Qaṭrān, and if the poems of Azraqī have perished, at least this impromptu Fragment will never die.

XVI

[The king Ṭug̲h̲ānsh̲āh who was playing dice wanted two sixes to win the wager in a game of backgammon. So he controlled and threw the dice; but instead of *two sixes* he obtained *two ones*—whereupon he lost his temper completely. Now the dice is a cube and on this cube the position of *No. 1* is right opposite the position of *No. 6*; so the poet Azraqī came forward and said]

IF His Majesty wanted a throw of *two sixes* and obtained *two ones*, do not think the dice has disregarded His Majesty's summons.

The two sixes have come, but as they had to come to the Royal Presence *they came bowing low with their forehead on the ground.*

NAṬANZĪ

Adīb of Naṭanz, died in 499 H/1106 A.D. lives in Persian poetry because of this single verse.

XVII

[Each hemistich is a complete anagram; it can be read both *forwards* and *backwards* in the original *Persian* as follows :

↔ ←

Z Nṭnz āmd rkt krd mā z Nṭnz Z Nṭnzm z Nṭnzm z Ntnzm z Nṭnz

→ →

Further, the second hemistich contains the device of quadruple repetition, examples of which are singularly rare in Persian poetry. Finally the verse is onomatopoeic : the petty birthplace of the poet becomes an important town because of the *sound* of the verse.

FROM Naṭanz comes my mental outfit from Naṭanz : from Naṭanz I am, from Naṭanz I am, from Naṭanz I am, from Naṭanz.

'UMAR KHAYYĀM

The poet-astronomer 'Umar-i-Khayyām, died 1123 A.D., made original contributions to algebraic equations, introduced the Jalālī era (after the Seljūk king Jalālu'd-Dīn Malikshāh 1073-1092) and wrote quatrains wherein wine, sin and life are the main themes. Wine gives pleasure (1-2), *drowns sorrows* (3), *is permissible in Paradise so why not drink now* (4-5) *especially as the future is uncertain and there may be no Paradise at all* (8). *And if to drink wine is sinful, even so go ahead with it* (9) *for* the sinfulness of Man helps God to exercise His attribute of Mercy (10-12). *And sins must be non-punishable because our actions are pre-determined and* punishment of sins which Man is powerless to resist would make God a tyrant (14). *As for Life, dust we are and to dust we return—the beggar's dust being indistinguishable from the King's* (21).

XVIII 1

SINCE Venus and the Moon appeared in the sky, no one saw anything better than pure wine.

I am surprised at the vintners for what can they buy anything more precious than the wine they sell.

XVIII 2

KHAYYĀM, if thou art drunk, be happy; if thou art in the company of a moon-faced beauty, be happy;

Since "*not to be*" is the end, think thou "art not" when thou "*art*" and be happy !

XVIII 3

DRINK wine which removes the excess of scarcity and the worries of 72 sects:

Refrain not from wine whose one draught is the cure for a thousand maladies.

XVIII 4

I have heard of the Paradise-to-be, of its fairies and the Garden of Eden, of its streams of wine, milk, honey and sugar.

Fill the bowl of wine and hand it over to me : a bird in the hand is worth a thousand in the bush.

XVIII 5

THEY guarantee us a Paradise, full of fairies, flowing with wine, milk and honey,

If I have taken to drinking in the company of a sweetheart, am I doing anything else save wha He expects of me hereafter?

XVIII 6

To have or not to have, to restrain or enjoy—how long shall I worry with the thought of tomorrow?

Fill high the bowl with wine, for I do not even know whether I shall inhale the breath I am exhaling.

XVIII 7

O thou who art the product of the 4 Elements and the 7 Spheres and art constantly in the fire of worry, because of these 7 and 4,

Drink, pretty creature, drink: a thousand times I have told thee this, when thou art gone, thou art gone—thou shalt return no more!

XVIII 8

THEY say, "Paradise with its fairies is a fine place;" and I reply: "the juice of the grape is finer."

Take this cash and ignore that credit—"oh the brave music of a distant drum !"

XVIII 9

THE caravan of life goes on its way: utilize the fleeting moments and take thy fill of pleasure.

O cup-bearer, why dost thou worry over the Resurrection of Tomorrow: bring the bowl of wine for the night is passing.

XVIII 10

THE tavern flourishes because of our drinking: the blood of 2,000 broken vows is on my soul;

If I do not commit sins, how will the Divine Mercy function? His resplendent Mercy exists because of the (dark) sins we commit.

XVIII 11

I am a sinful servant, where is Thy Grace? The night is dark and I am far from home, where is Thy Light?

Wert Thou to give us Paradise as a reward for our virtues, that would be a tradesman's exchange, not Thy Mercy.

XVIII 12

WHO is there who hath committed no sins? Let me know; and how did the sinless fare? let me know;

Good for good and evil for evil is our method of dealing: if it is also Thine, what is the difference between us and Thee? let me know.

XVIII 13

O thou who movest like a polo-ball struck with a mallet, have a drink and put not thy questions to me.

For He who keepeth thee moving in this world of strife, *'tis He who knows 'tis He who knows, 'tis He who knows, 'tis He.*

XVIII 14

ON my path Thou layest a thousand snares for my soul (*and makest my Fall inevitable*) and yet Thou sayest: "Beware no false step, *for I shall punish thee.*"
When there is nothing in the Universe, not even an atom, not subservient to Thy command, 'tis strange that Thou shouldst call *me a sinner when the order to sin comes from Thee.*

XVIII 15

THE mystery of Eternity will not be known to me and thee; the scroll of Destiny cannot be read by me and thee;
Behind a veil there is a little talk between me and thee; when the veil is uplifted, down will the curtain drop on me and thee.

XVIII 16

FROM the nadir of the dark Earth to the Zenith of Saturn I was able to solve all problems.
All manner of intricate knots I unravelled with ingenuity but not he Knot of (Life and) Death.

XVIII 17

NEVER did my heart abandon its pursuit of knowledge; few were the secrets which remained unknown to me.
After thinking deep, night and day, for two and seventy years, *it is now known to me that nothing was known to me.*

XVIII 18

FOR a while, from being a youngster, I became a master—and happy was I at having become a master.
But listen to my ultimate fate: from the dust I was raised to be scattered in the air like dust.

XVIII 19

THAT palace whose turrets reached the sky, on whose portals kings rubbed their foreheads—

I saw nothing there save a cuckoo sitting on a cornice—and then on my ears fell its significant cry: "Where? Where? Where? Where? *kū-kū-kū-kū*."

XVIII 20

LAST night I *broke* the earthen jug on a slab of stone, like the drunken tramp I was.

Said the jug to me with a *broken* voice : "I was once like thee; thou also shalt become like unto me."

XVIII 21

I saw the potter in his workshop sitting at the wheel, bent at his task:

He was giving the unfinished pots their handle and head—the head from the dust of the skull of a king, the handle from the dust of the hand of a beggar.

XVIII 22

HAD we the choice, would we have come? Had we the choice would we have gone?

The best would have been if in this desolate world we had neither come, nor been, nor gone!

MU'IZZĪ

Abū 'Abdu'llāh Muḥammad Mu'izzī, poet-laureate of the seljūq kings, Malikshāh and Sulṭān Sanjar, is the author of a dīwān *of Odes, recently published. He died* c. *542 H/1147 after contradicting a false notice of his death issued by Sanā'ī.*

XIX 1

[Mu'izzī lived in an age of great qaṣīdah-writers. The qaṣīdah (Ode) originated in Arabia; and the Arab poet firstly describes the deserted dwelling places and relics of encampment because his sweetheart, a tent-dweller, is no longer in the oasis where she previously lived. Then the poet describes his sweetheart whom he is searching on a camel reduced to leanness because of the fatigues of desert-travel. A contemporary critic asks the Persian poet, however, not to describe imaginary journeys on a camel which he never owned, through a desert which he never saw, to contact a sweetheart residing in the same city as the poet himself. In the following Ode, a classic because of its system of internal rhymes and the assonance of its words, Mu'izzī follows the Arabian pattern.]

O camel-driver, break not thy journey save in the homeland of my beloved so that for a while I may weep over the ruined house, the waste land and the relics of encampment.

I shall fill the empty house with the blood (of my heart); I shall make the waste land rose-red with my bloodshot tears; I shall convert the relics of encampment into a stream laden with the waters of my eyes.

I see the pavilion devoid of the face of my tent-dwelling sweetheart; I see the meadow devoid of the stature of that graceful cypress.

Where flowed the bumpers and bowls of wine the wild ass stamps his hoofs; where sounded the notes of the harp, lute and flute rises now the screech of the kite, the cawing of the raven.

Ever since So'dā left the tent, ever since Salmā left the chamber, ever since Laylā left the bower, my soul as it were left my body.

No stage can be traversed without facing some problem created by the tale of that sweet-lipped lady with a silvery chin.

Where that Beloved was, in the company of her friends, walking in a garden, there the wolf and the fox have made their lair, the wild ass and the vulture fixed their abode.

In place of the moon is a cloud; in place of sugar, poison; in place of the gem, a stone; in place of the lily, a thorn.

Aye, when Destiny strikes, fortune becomes misfortune, petals change to weeds, joy turns to grief.

That mansion which looked like the garden of Eden radiant with the face of my idol, now its wall is crumbling and leaning, bent like the back of an idol-worshipper.

When the blue sphere has played such havoc with human habitation, why should the traveller travel to visit the haunts of my lady-love?

A lady with a face crimson like the leaves of the Arghanun tree; a fairy with a body soft as Chinese silk; a cypress with lips like pomegranate grains; a moon with stature like the pomegranate tree.

The magic of her eyes, supreme; on the silver of her face an ambrosial coat-of-mail; her tresses, bonds and fetters; her hair, all curls and rings.

Since she was parted from me, my heart is annoyed with my bosom; my musk has changed to camphor;[1] my box-tree has become a willow.[2]

Separation from her has distracted my mind. I am sowing the seeds of patience; and have become like a bird roasted on the spit.

In quest of her I am entering the wilderness with the star Suhā as my guide; with the dragon's[3] fear in my heart, with the demon's[4] thought in my mind.

---

[1] *i.e.*, my black hair has become white.

[2] *i.e.*, my erect stature has become bent.

[3-4] The Arabian wilderness is inhabited by all sorts of monster and especially by a demon who beguiles traveller

Now with panthers in a cavern; anon with gazelles at a pool; now with the beasts which emerge with the moon;[1] now with the game which appears with the stars.[2]

Because of my eyes and heart I am all the time in water and fire (respectively); my abode is on a camel pacing the hills and plains.

"The ship of the desert," cheerfully resigned like the mountain (to bearing a heavy burden on its back); load-carrier from dusk to dawn; thorn-eater from dawn to dusk.

Desert-traveller; fast runner; poor eater; globe-trotter[3]—far ahead of the antelope in jumping and running.

Like *wind* o'er the plain, like *water* down the dale, it never slows its speed: like *fire* rising from the *earth*, it starts from its resting-place to climb the mountain.

The planets in their orbits are amazed at its performance: it considers the distance from Ṭā'if Ao K͟hutan to be no more than a league—such is its power of endurance.

On its back in my seat; in its strides is the attainment of my aim: I am the passenger and my destination is the assembly-hall of the Premier.

He will not play foul to win—such is his policy; there is no jugglery and double-dealing in his action; no cant and trickery in his speech.

When God brought him into the world He made the goodness of Life incarnate: one would think that it was out of pure soul that the Creator moulded his substance.

He who approaches thee for asylum, for title, for bread seeks from thee the fulfilment of his needs in the same fashion as a child asks for his mother's milk (knowing what she will do).

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1 Literally, "friends of the moon."

2 Literally, "companions of the stars in the milky way."

3 Actually, instead of "poor eater, *globe-trotter*"; "eats little, *goes far*": to find appropriate English equivalent for Persian compound words is the despair of the translator!

I am singing thy praise; I am expressing my thanks; and because of thy high office my body is sound and my heart is happy—[let people come and *see*].

XIX 2

(On his recovery from an accident)

THANKS be to God that this servant was not accidentally killed by His Majesty.

Thanks be to God that the arrow which he fired from the bow with the intension of hitting the bull's eye, had no intension of taking my life.

And so though I suffered pain for a while, though I remained bed-ridden for a year

How can I express my thanks to God that I have lived to attend his court and to perform my function of singing his praise once again like a servant.

* * *

The king of kings, Sulṭān Sanjar[1] is a lion which infallibly secures his prey and is a hero who is always successful in combat.

XIX 3

[On making a defective tress a sign of beauty] [2]

IF that tress like musk on that face like spring is short, be not surprised (*if it is a perfect match*).

For the night tends to become short in spring—and that face is like spring and that tress is like night.

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[1] The last of the Great Seljūqs ruled 1117-1157 A.D.

[2] Notice the device of "poetical aetiology", offering a poetical explanation for an actual fact.

SANĀ'Ī

'Abdu'l Majd Majdūd is the earliest mystical qaṣīdah-writer of Irān. He lived a blameless life at Ghaznā where he died c. 545 H/1150 A.D. His mathnawī, Ḥadīqah, *is more ethical than mystical*

XX[1]

[Written with the zeal of a missionary and the restraint of a thinker this Ode is meant chiefly for votaries of Greek philosophy].

MAKE not your abode either in the body or soul for this is noble and that is ignoble: step beyond them both; be neither here nor there.

Whatever deflects you from the Path (of God), be it infidelity or fidelity is the same; whatever diverts you from the Friend, be it ugly or beautiful is alike.

The Mystical Traveller is he whom Hell leaves cool; the Lover is he whom the Sea leaves dry.

The words you utter for the sake of Faith, be they Hebrew or Syriac, are the same; the house you seek for the sake of Truth, be it in the East or West is alike.

To pronounce the formula of Faith is this that its two phrases, like the gaping jaws of a crocodile, should straightaway enable you to swallow the entire Sea of Existence.

The bride of the Holy *Qur'ān* will lift its veil only when you make the Kingdom of the Faith free of all the tumult of the Flesh.

'Tis not strange if only the words, not the spirit of the Holy *Qur'ān* fall to your lot, for the blind eye gets naught but the heat from the sun.

"*Die before you die*",[1] if you want everlasting life, for 'twas such a death which before us took Enoch to Paradise.

---

[1] *i.e.*, kill your lower, your appetitive self in your own lifetime. This is a well-known Tradition of the Prophet.

Why do you remain below like a vulture waiting for the carcase; break your prison-wall and soar like a peacock.

If you have acquired knowledge, beware of falling into disbelief, for when the thief comes at night with a lantern he steals the more thoroughly.

If you possess knowledge then show the illiterate man's firmness of faith, for 'twould be grossly improper if the Chinese should be donning the pilgrim's garb and the Meccan should be sleeping in the valley of Mecca.

Even as you decorate your body, decorate your soul with theology for 'twould be highly improper, if inside, the king should be lying naked and outside, his pavilion be of brocade.

Let obedience to God be your dress for the next world, otherwise when Death takes away your earthly garb, you will remain naked and dishonoured.

God tells you : "Dont drink wine in this world" ; the Christian physician tells you : "Dont eat sweets if you are bilious."

For the sake of religion, you will not deem that to be unlawful which God has proscribed; but for the sake of the body you will accept that as lawful which a Christian has prescribed.

As for me, praise be to God, Reason has cooperated with knowledge and aspiration to take me away from the things of the world and to lead me on to the Path of Divine Unity.

As a natural consequence, I desire neither the Kingdom of the Earth nor the Kingdom of Heaven; and I continue to say, alike in prosperity and adversity:

"O God, give *Sanā'ī* sanā'ī,[1] make him eminent in knowledge so much so that Avicenna may envy him.

---

[1] The second "sanā'ī" means insight.

Make not my life like that of a rose which has to face death in youth; nor make my desire (to live) like wine which becomes young in advanced old age.

If hitherto I have not abstained from innocent pleasures,[1] deem it not as a lapse on my part, for the odds—the desert, summer, cold water and dropsy—were heavily set against me.

What is related about the saints, "bestow upon us and guide us (to it)"; whatever the Prophets have said, that "*we believe and affirm*".

XX 2

THE wise man will not cultivate friendship in this world,

For friendship is either with those who agree or with those who disagree with you; and at both these prospects, the heart palpitates:

If it is with those who disagree, it is a torture when it lasts; if it is with those who agree, it is a torture when it ends.

XX 3

WITH the people of this world, whereof most are misguided and only a few *are on the Path* [*ba rah ănd*].

Live in such fashion that when you die, you may escape;[2] and don't live in such fashion that when you die, *'twill be they who escape* [*barahand*].[3]

---

1 Every Muslim has to abstain from unlawful pleasures, but the mystic has also to abstain from lawful pleasures.

2 *i.e.*, you may escape from them.

3 *i.e.*, they may escape from *a nuisance* like you. The compound homonymy *i.e.*, *barahand* (they may escape) equal to the three words *ba rah ănd* (are on the Path of God) contained at the end of the first couplet, cannot be reproduced in English.

XX$_4$

[Premature obituary notice on Mu'izzī][1]

How long this lamentation for Mu'izzī whom God has transported to Heaven and given an angel's everlasting life!

Since he was a *scribe* like *the Mercury of the Heaven*[2], to match his rôle with the deed, he took the *tīr* (*arrow*) of the King and gave it to the *Tīr* (*Mercury*)[3] of the Heaven.

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1 Mu'izzī was accidentally hit by an arrow of Sulṭān Sanjar who was practising archery, but Mu'izzī himself states (see *supra* XIX$_2$) that he survived the accident.

2 The seven Ptolemaic planets are the Moon (the Queen of the Heavens); *Mercury* (*the scribe of the Heavens*); Venus (the Minstrel of the Heavens); Mars (the Executioner of the Heavens); the Sun (the King of the Heavens); Jupiter (the Judge of the Heavens); and Saturn (the Sentinel of the Heavens).

3 The pun on *tīr* (*arrow*) and *Tīr* (*Mercury*), as also on *Mu'izzi* (*the poet's name*) and *mu'izza* (*lamentation*) contained in the original Persian untranslatable.

MAHSATĪ

She was the mistress of Sulṭān Sanjar 1117-1157 and this impromptu quatrain is her best performance as a poetess.

XXI

[If it has been snowing heavily overnight, that should be an incentive, not a deterrent, for the Sulṭān to go out riding with Mahsatī]

O king, the sky hath saddled the horse of Good Fortune for thy sake, and from amongst all monarchs hath singled thee out for praise.

To prevent the *golden* shoes of thy horse from becoming stained with mud, see how Nature hath spent a whole night in covering the earth with a carpet of *silver*.

ANWARĪ

Awḥadu'd-Dīn Anwarī died 581 H/1185 was court-poet of Sulṭān Sanjar and a great qaṣīdah-writer. His celebrated threnody on the Ghuzz spoliation of Khurāsān (1) *made Ruknu'd-Dīn the Qarā-Khānid ruler of Turkestān march into Khurāsān with 100,000 troops and wrest Balkh from Ṭūṭī, the leader of the Ghuzz insurrection. Anwarī had a fine sense of humour* (2—5) *: his comment on a horse presented to him by the king is a classic* (6).

XXII₁

[On the Ghuzz spoliation of Khurāsān]

O morning breeze shouldst thou blow towards Samarqand, carry for the Khāqān this letter from the people of Khurāsān

A letter which shows at a glance the sighing hearts of friends and contains in its folds the bleeding hearts of martyrs.

A letter written in the ink of the blood of orphans and dried in the furnace of the bosom of the oppressed.

Listening to its words ruptures the canal of the ear; seeing its script makes the pupil of the eye blood-shot.

How long will the condition of the people of Khurāsān remain concealed from the Khāqān, the King of the World?

Dost thou know that there is not a single person in Khurāsān today who hath not suffered at the hands of these vile marauders, the Ghuzz?

Petty people have become the superior officers of the great; misers have been put in charge over the generous.

At the doorsteps of ignoble wretches, noble knights have to mourn their misfortune; at the hands of lewd upstarts men of noble lineage have to seek a solution of their fate and misery.

No one is happy today save at the time of his death; no girl is virgin today save in the womb of her mother.

The Friday Mosque of every city hath become an open-air stall for the horses of the Ghuzz: neither is its door intact nor its roof.

And if in the Friday sermon, the Ghuzz leader has not yet been proclaimed king, 'tis only because in the whole of Khurāsān, neither a preacher remains nor a pulpit.

XXII 2

WHAT honour do I gain by writing lyrics or panegyrics? Why should I consume my soul in the fire of deep thinking?

I have spent 20 years living on "*But*" and "*Perhaps*": God hath not granted me Noah's life of a thousand years.

Hereafter when I see that the door for Prize Competitions is open (it will have the reverse effect on me): I shall pull in the reins of my speech.

And if the patron does not pay me for my panegyrics, I shall have recourse to satire and ruin his reputation completely.

XXII 3

To discharge the duties of a courtier, why should a man wear out his heart and soul?

Why sharpen the tongue for repartees in prose and verse? Why delve into the mind of original ideas?

For the sum-total of a courtier's life comes to this: receive slaps and give abuses.

[1] *i.e.*, "*But* my panegyric cannot remain unremunerated. *Perhaps* I shall get my reward tomorrow."

XXII 4

ANWARĪ, dost thou know what is poetry and greed? This is the babe and that is the mother.

When, with knowledge, thou wearest a crest like a cock, why dost thou concern thyself with eggs (*i.e.*, rewards) like a hen?

XXII 5

[When Sulṭān Sanjar was besieging the fortress of *Hazarāsp* held by Atsiz of Khwārazm]

MAKE one charge and take *Hazarāsp* today, tomorrow Khwārazm and a hundred *Hazarāsps* (or *a hundred thousand horses* for "Hazar" is 1000 and "asp" is a horse) are thine.

The Reply of Waṭwāṭ, Poet of Atsiz

EVEN if thy enemy, O king, be Rustam the paladin, not an ass can he take from your *Hazarāsp* (or from your *thousand horses*).

XXII 6

[The king ordered that a horse should be given to Anwarī but the horse actually given by the Master of the Stable was so old that it died of fatigue on being shifted to the poet's house. The next day when Anwarī came to court, walking on foot, "why don't you use the horse we gave you?" asked the king to which Anwarī replied as follows:]

That horse was so swift of foot that in one night it traversed the distance from the earth to heaven.

FALAKĪ

Muḥammad Falakī lived from 501 to 550 H/c 1108-1155 A.D.: he was the pupil of Khāqānī and court-poet of Abu'l-Hayjā Fakhru'd-Dīn Minūchihr II, ruler of Shirwān on the Western Coast of the Caspian Sea.

XXIII [1]

[In this *unique* Ode, because it contains historical facts otherwise unknown and because it is the only example of a threnody written in Persian by a Muslim poet on a Christian king, Falakī offers condolences to Minūchihr II and his queen, Thamar, on the death of ex-King Dimitrī of Georgia, brother of Thamar and son of David. Dimitrī died in his 63rd year between 1154 and 1156 A.D.]

ONCE more the revolving sphere has raised up dust in the world; once again, bent on mischief, it has brought Resurrection in the world.

What a thorn has it pierced in the heart of the globe! What blood has it bled from the veins of the country!

It has snatched away from the throne of royalty a crowned ruler, in mourning for whose loss, the world's joy has ended.

The Emperor of *Abkhāz* and *Shekī*,[1] the king of the horizons who brought to the East the tribute from the West.

Dīmitrī, son of David, the head of the family of the *Bagratids*, who, with his seed, made the field of the realm productive.

During *63 years*, with his talent, learning and manliness, he revealed to the world, each day, a new disposition.

He left the world; and the world added the duration of his life to the just King's duration of life.

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[1] Abkhāz and Shekī are districts in the Caucasus.

Shirwānshāh, the Ghāzī, the just king of the world, who by his excellence and justice has brought glory to Royalty.

Humanity's redresser of wrongs, *king Minūchihr* who has brought down the malice of heaven on the head of the Khazar tribe.

If, with their calamitous effect, the times have not spared thy noble, chaste and sacred harem,

She (*Queen Thamar*) is a world of intelligence and knows that for (mortal) man, God, Glorious and High, has made the wound of death, incurable.

What remedy is there save patience, for God has brought us all into being (merely) to traverse this path (of Death) ?

Since in this distracted halting stage there is no rest, free is he who has gone and turned his face to that permanent abode.

XXIII $_2$

[In 532/1138 the Bāqilānī dam, *Band-i-Bāqilānī*, situated on the River Kur burst its bounds and Minūchihr II had it rebuilt not at its original site but elsewhere up the river to prevent the recurrence of the flood by the accumulation of a large head of water.]

IT was *Bāqilānī* and now became *Nāqilānī* for the king shifted it so that heaven might eliminate its defect.

The king bound the dam of the flood and removed *LĀN* from *BĀQILĀNĪ* : the dam alone remained (literally *BAND BÀQI* remained for *BAND-I-BĀQILĀNĪ* minus *LĀN* is equal to *BAND BĀQĪ*) and as for the flood, it went *into what remained* (*dar bāqì shud*) *i.e.*, it went *into the chains which remained* for *BAND* (dam) also means "*chains*".

The king Abu'l-Hayjā Minūchihr II by whom has been revived in the world the government of Kay Khusraw and the justice of Nūshīrwān.

XXIII [3]

My darling love did never give, never did give my darling love
A moment's bliss to my heart in pain; to my heart in pain, a moment's bliss.

Her union brings a hundred lives; a hundred lives her union brings:
'Tis bliss to miss to part from her; from her to part 'tis bliss to miss.

My grief is all in all from her; from her is all in all my grief:
The cure—a kiss—I seek from her; from her seek I the cure —a kiss.

The garden is all gold with her; with her all gold the garden is:
Like this a friend hath never been; never hath been a friend like this.

KHĀQĀNĪ

Afḍalu'd-Dīn Ibrahīm Khāqānī, the most difficult Qaṣīdah-writer to interpret, was the court-poet of the two rulers of Shirwān Minū-chihr II and his son Akhsatān. He was born in Shirwān c. 500 H/1107; travelled in the Hijāz and ʻIrāq; suffered temporary imprisonment during the reign of Akhsatān and died in Tabriz c. 592 H/1196 His works comprise a mathnawī and a dīwān, containing inter alia *a magnificent patriotic threnody on Ctesiphon, the Sāsānian capital. Many nationalists of Modern Persia,* e.g., *Dānish have written a "mustazād" to this threnody,* i.e., *they have prefixed each verse of Khāqānī by 5 verses of their own composition.*

XXIV [1]

[On Ctesiphon or Madā'in]

DOST thou desire to see the writing on the wall, O my heart, then look at the Palace of the Chosroes and see in its ruins, a mirror of warning?

Draw thyself awhile from the Tigris' bank to Ctesiphon and with the river in thy eye water Ctesiphon with a second Tigris.

The Tigris herself weeps a hundred blood-streams issuing from the ruddy furnace of her eyes.

Dost thou see the bubbles of foam on the Tigris' breast and the blisters on the Tigris' lips raised with the fume of her sighs?

With the fire of longing the heart of the Tigris is aflame: didst thou ever hear that water was combustible?

Were the Tigris to mingle the frost of her sighs with the fire of her heart, half of her would freeze to ice and half of her, leap like tongues of flame.

Speak with tears to the broken *Hall of Audience*[1] and listen with the inner ear to its heart-breaking message:

"I was the Hall of Justice : if I have suffered such oppression, what then will be the fate of the Halls of Oppression?"

This is the Yard whose carved lions overawed the Lion of the Sky.

This is the Hall whose glitter came from coronets and crowns.

This is the Chamber whose Chamberlains ruled over Babel and Turkistān.

Nūshirwān and the golden apples (on the lances of his body-guard); Parwīz and that golden carpet of his called "*the Garden*"—how completely have they been destroyed and levelled with the Earth!

Parwīz never came to a reception without bringing his *Garden*—but where is that Gardener now and where the *Garden*? Go and read (the passage in the *Holy Qur'ān*) : "*How many gardens did they leave behind!*"

Didst thou ask where those great ones have gone? Mark those swollen mounds of earth and see how the womb of this harlot is perpetually pregnant with their bodies.

How many royal sons the Earth has swallowed! Is the appetite of this filicidal mother insatiable?

[What has she done with Khusraw and Parwīz and Shīrīn?] Shīrīn's blood is the juice of thy grape; Parwīz's dust is thy pitcher of wine.

Aye, this infanticide, this hag with white eyebrows and black sagging breasts takes the hearts' blood of her own babes make a crimson rouge for her wrinkled cheeks.

---

[1] The Hall where Nūshirwān (531-579 A.D.) dispensed justice. Many kings have been called Great but Nūshīrwān alone is known as *the Just* He would not take by force from a reluctant widow an adjacent piece of land to complete the courtyard in front of his palace—on hearing which the Roman ambassador exclaimed: "This is the most perfect square in the world."

On returning from a journey, 'tis customary to bring gifts for friends and relatives. I have returned from a journey bringing for my friends and relatives this gift of a threnody.

Khāqānī, go begging for warning to *the Palace of the Chosroes* so that hereafter the great Khāqān[1] may come begging to thy doorsteps to take warning from thee!

XXIV [2]

[The English language is far richer than Persian in sound-vocabulary but Khāqāni has produced a passage, so rich in sound-words that it is difficult to find their precise English equivalents.]

IF the *call* of Return were to come to me today, and the *happy tidings* of 'Do not despair' were to come tomorrow;

If the *address* of the people of Paradise should come to the ears of my senses; and if the *all-hail* of the permanent world should fall to the lot of my soul;

The *invisible voice* from the four corners of the Heavenly throne and the roar of God's drum from the five *beats* of No (God but God);

The *rustle* of the wings of Gabriel; the *blare* of the trumpet of Isrāfīl, the *din* of the morning scriptural *recitation* in Paradise; the *clink* of the jewellery of Hourīs (fairies);

The *whizz* of the sphere at the time of audition; the tones of the Pentateuch at the time of *recitation*;

The scratching of the Egyptian pen whilst drawing the signet; the neighing of an Arab steed during a battle;

The *singing* of Bārbad; the *piping* of minstrels and lutes; the *air* of the musician; the *tinkling* of tambourines and guitars;

The *moan* of wood-pigeons; the *carol* of larks and starlings; the *cooing* of the ringdove; the *singing* of the nightingale;

[1] Akhsatān and his father, Minūchihr were known as the Great Khāqāns—the Great Kings. With such contempt for his patron is it surprising that Khāqānī should have suffered imprisonment?

The *tuning* of the lips of the beloved to the verses of Khāqānī; the *scaling* of the voice of Qumrī to the Phoenix mood—

From all these *sounds* I do not receive that happiness which I get when the *salutation* of love comes from the land of my friend.

XXIV 3

[If for seafaring people *the camel is a ship of the desert*, then for a landsman like Khāqānī, *the ship is a camel of the sea*: says he, about a "*boat in motion on the Tigris*".]

On the Tigris, *a boat* is at rest and in motion like the aspect of travellers journeying within themselves (*i.e.*, mystics in deep meditation and with perfect facial repose).

Like the she-camel of Sālīḥ from head to foot; and underneath there is the serpent of Moses.[1]

---

[1] Ṣāliḥ the prophet sent to the people of Thamūd produced miraculously from a stone a she-camel in the tenth month of pregnancy and added a warning that the destruction of the camel or her young would be attended by the destruction of the tribe. The ferry-boat on the Tigris is *from head to foot* i.e., *stem to stern* like this *she-camel of Ṣāliḥ because it carries passengers and saves them from destruction.* The serpent Moses is the boisterous sea which engulfs victims.

MUJĪRU'D-DĪN and SHARAFU'D-DĪN

XXV

Mujīru'd-Dīn of Baylaqān was Khāqānī's pupil. For speaking ill of Isfahān:

"From Iṣfahān," said I, "the sustenance of my life shall come."
"Fellow-feeling," thought I, "is a ruby which from the mines of Iṣfahān doth come.
But alas! I knew not that the people of Iṣfahān were blind, notwithstanding the sight-giving collyrium which from Iṣfahān doth come."

to which Sharafu'd-Dīn of Shufurwah replied as follows:

O wretch who hath satirized a city which is a part of Īrān but better than the whole,
What wilt thou do with Iṣfahān and its sight-giving collyrium? Thy need is for the sight-taking needle—and that blinding needle exists in plenty everywhere.

NIẒĀMĪ

Niẓāmu'd-Dīn Abū Muḥammad Ilyās, known as Niẓāmī, was born at Ganjah and lived from 535 to 599 H/1140-1202. His reputation rests on his mathnawīs, the Makhzanu'l-Asrār Khusraw Shīrīn, Laylā Majnūn, Sikandar Nāmah *and* Haft Paykar. *Written in 561, 571, 584, 587 and 595 A.H. respectively, they are collectively known as the "Five Treasurers" and have inspired celebrities like Amīr Khusraw, Jāmī and Fayḍī to write parallels. As for the few lyrics ascribed to Niẓāmī, save for one magnificent specimen, they are not of high value.*

XXVI 1

[Taken from the 1st Volume of the *Sikandar Nāmah*, this is an account of the Battle of Arbela, 331 B.C., between Darius Codomannus and Alexander the Great.]

THE lion's *roar* came from the *blowing* bugle; the brain reeled with the *blare* of trumpets.

The whip came down with a *crack* which pierced the (star-) studded vault of the sky.

As the *rush* of charging troops arose from the field of battle, the picked reserves *hustled and bustled* for action.

The earth *cracked* and split; thou wouldst say that Isrāfīl had *blown* the trumpet of the Day of the Judgement.

An impenetrable fog covered the sky; the rein of safety no longer remained in the hand (of the combatants).

With dust, the outlines of helmets and saddles became indistinguishable; the earth became sky; the sky became earth.

Below it sank and up it rose on the day of battle, down to the Fish the stream of blood, up to the moon the cloud of dust. [1]

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[1] This and the following verse are unacknowledged quotations from Firdawsī. See IX_6.

With the hoofs of horses such dust arose from the wide battle field that the Climes became Six and the Heavens became Eight.

Heart-rending were the loud *shrieks* (of the wounded); suffocating were the nooses of the lasso.

(Always in and out), that monster of an arrow had not a moment's rest in the lair of the bow.

[The Dragon guards treasure; but] this lasso was a scaly dragon which had opened wide its jaws *to destroy the treasure* (of life).

XXVI 2

[This account of a sea-voyage, taken from the 2nd Volume of the *Sikandar Nāmah*, is unique because nowhere else in Persian literature is there a reference to the lost *Rah Nāmah*—a Pahlwaī treatise on the art of navigating the Southern Sea, from Persia to China. This *Rah Nāmah* is cited by Arab nautical treatises of the 15th century A.D. Ancient voyages were chiefly coastal because of the belief that the earth was surrounded by "*a circumambient sea*" whence no return was possible].

HOW ALEXANDER WENT TO CHINA AND SAILED IN THE SEA

FROM the sea-shore he came to the deep and cast a burden (*i.e*, launched a boat) on the mighty sea.

The Lord of the World (*i.e.*, Alexander) drove merrily along the salt sea and made the boat to leap; bravo, the skilful hand of the chief!

When the ship had covered a little distance in the sea, there appeared an ocean-current

Which swept the waters towards the *circumambient sea* whence all return was impossible.

The old navigators, acquainted with the locality, were frightened by that perilous belt;

And when they consulted *the Rah Nāmah* again, they found it was imperative for them to return.

There appeared an island at a distance, shining like a blaze of light.

And they stayed there for a while—all on board frightened with the *circumambient sea.*

Said an experienced old seaman to the well-informed king:

"This temporary shelter is precarious, for this is the very last port according to *the Rah Nāmah.*

Be not adventurous, for the water of this bay is flowing out to the *circumambient sea.*

If we proceed any farther we shall not find another port."

And when Alexander came to know that it was impossible to proceed beyond the *ocean-current*

He ordered a magical image to be set, with its hand upraised as a warning: "This is the ne plus ultra of navigation and of what lies beyond in the sea no man has knowledge."

XXVI 3

[The game of *polo* originated in Persia; and Niẓāmī describes here a friendly polo match between the teams of King Khusraw Parwīz d. 622 A.D. and his queen, Shīrīn.]

HE said to Shīrīn: "Let us mount our horses and play *polo* on this field."

On one side was the Moon (*i.e.*, Queen Shīrīn) and the stars (her attendants);

On the other, the king (Khusraw Parwīz) and his A.D.C.s.

Sometimes the sun (*i.e.*, the king) carried off the ball, sometimes the moon (*i.e.*, the queen); now Shīrīn scored a goal, now the King.

After playing *polo* to their hearts' content, they had a joy-ride in the *polo-field.*

XXVI 4

The world is dark and the Path difficult (to traverse); draw in the reigns of thy steed and for a while direct thy earthly being to the privacy of the soul.

Expel the ravens of the Flesh from the garden of Humanity; and lay a share for the Phoenix of the spirit, as a novel adventure.

Since thou hast been admitted to His inner circle, discard the outer Form and at one gulp, freely drain thousands of bottles of spiritual wine.

Don't be sluggish in the company of the light-hearted: when the cup-bearer warms up, be quick to take the heavy bowl and drain it.

Thou seest His Hell and Heaven: ignore them both; put thy foot down on the forehead of Hell and draw a circle round Heaven (to delete it).

When thou hast become drunk with His presence, strike the tent of the Heavens, shake the pole of the Empyrean, pull down the ropes of the sky.

Traverse His Path without feet, see His Beauty without eyes; hear His tale without ears; drink His wine without a mouth.

O *Niẓāmī*, what secrets are these which thou hast revealed from thy mind! Who knows thy mystery? Draw back thy tongue; draw back thy tongue.

XXVI 5

Last night I went to the tavern. There was no way for me (to get in). I shouted and cried but there was no one to listen to me.

Either none of the wine-sellers was awake or else, since I was nobody, nobody cared to open the door for me.

When a quarter of the night had passed by, more or less, a reveller put his head out of the casement and turned his face towards me;

And said: "How fares it with thee ? Whom dost thou want at this time of the night? And to come here at this untimely hour what may it mean?"

"Open the door," said I. "Go thy way and don't be absurd," said he. "This is not the time when the door was opened by anyone for anybody;

This is not a mosque where the door shall be opened for thee all the time—where thou mayest come ever so late and quickly push thyself forward into the front line of worshippers.

This is a tavern of the Magians—a place for revellers, with their barmaid and bar: a place of light, wine, songs and sweets.

All the communities found in the world are here—Muslims, Brahmins, Zoroastrians, Christians and Jews (in one compact fraternity).

What? Hast thou something to say? Then go and first of all make thyself the dust under their feet."

XXVI [6]

I used to say: "Khāqānī will say '*Alas*' for me;" *alas* that I should be saying, '*Alas*' for Khāqānī.

KAMĀLU'D-DĪN of IṢFAHĀN

Kamālu'd-Dīn Ismā'īl of Iṣfahān, died 634/1237, was the panegyrist of the Khwārazmian rulers whose empire, when over run by Chingiz Khān, extended over the whole of Persia and Turkistān. The first extract given here is important because of its terminal words—parwarish, manish, munta'sh, Takish *etc.—which fix the correct name of the patron as TAKISH incorrectly given as TUKUSH by Rieu and TAKASH by Barthold. The second extract raises the whole vexed question of the awards given to patrons, see also under Firdawsī* IX 1; *Anwarī* XXII 2 & 6; *Waṭwāṭ and Ibn-i-Yamīn* XXXVI; *Salmān-i-Sāwajī* XXXVIII 3-5; *Ḥāfiẓ* XXXIX *etc.*

XXVII 1

O Emperor, with the pomp of Farīdūn and disposition of Alexander, because of thy policy, the kingdom and religion are thriving and prosperous.

I asked the sky, "art thou aware of a protector whose patronage makes the unfortunate fortunate?"

The true dawn smiled and directed its streaks to the court of Sulṭān 'Alāu'd-Dīn wa'd Dunyā Takish.

XXVII 2

The corn which I received this year from my patron, if not completely, was largely dust and earth.

The proportion of corn to earth therein was in the ratio of seeds to soil in a cornfield.

That the earth ate man I knew; but I did not know that man ate earth.

‘AṬṬĀR

The best known mathnawī of the mystical poet Farīdu'd-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār of Nīshāpūr 604-672/1207-1273 is the allegorical Manṭiqu'ṭ-Ṭayr (*The Logic of Birds*) *wherein the birds organize a flight to contact their king, Sīmurgh; but as the flight proceeds many birds drop off: the nightingale cannot be parted from the rose; the parrot from his gilded cage; the falcon from the king's hand; the partridge from the mountains; the duck from water. Other excuses are not wanting: the wagtail is too small; the peacock too large. And so only 30 birds* (sī murgh) *complete the flight which was from themselves to themselves, for the* Sīmurgh *proved naught but the 30 birds* (sī murgh) *and conversely, the seekers* (sī murgh) *naught but the sought* (Sīmurgh). *In the allegory, the birds are Sūfīs; their excuses, the unfitness of all men to become mystics, the Sīmurgh is the Divine Beloved; and the soul's Union with Him is given by the compound homonymy,* sī murgh=Simurgh.

XXVIII [1]

THEIR old deeds and misdeeds were cleansed and obliterated from their bosom.

The sun of "Nearness to God"[1] shone forth from them and with its rays, lit up their souls.

Then they saw the face of the Sīmurgh but it was only a reflection of these thirty birds of the world.

Quickly they looked, these thirty birds: there could be no doubt that they themselves were the Sīmurgh.

They were bewildered and astonished: were they this or that, they did not know.

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1 The psychological "states" which a mystic experiences are meditation, *nearness to God*, love, fear, hope, longing, intimacy, tranquillity, contemplation and certainty.

They found they were naught else than the Sīmurgh and the Sīmurgh was naught else than the thirty birds (sī murgh).

When they looked at the Sīmurgh, there was the (solitary) Simurgh in its place.

When they looked at themselves, 'twas otherwise: they were 30 birds (in number).

And when they looked at the Sīmurgh and themselves simultaneously, the two of them were one, neither more nor less.

This was that; that was this: in all the world, none ever heard a thing like this.

Drowned in perplexity, they fell a-thinking unconsciously.

And when they understood nothing of the matter at all, they asked without speech

If that Presence would unravel the mysteries of "I" and "We".

Without speech the Presence replied: " 'tis a mirror, bright like the sun, this Presence

Wherein whosoever comes, sees himself: in it, he sees the soul and body, body and soul.

Since you came here as thirty birds, you appeared thirty in the mirror.

But We are altogether far superior: We are Sīmurgh, the One Reality.

Known by a hundred glorious Names. Be annihilated, so that you may find yourselves in Us."

And so in Him, they became annihilated; the shadows had lost themselves in the sun; farewell !

XXVIII 2

A young man asked a heart-enlightened old man: "what have you lost that you are going about with your back bent?"

Said the old man of refined speech: "I am looking for the days of my youth that are gone."

MAWLĀNĀ RŪMĪ

Jalālu'd-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī, 604-672/1207-1273, was born at Balkh and is known as Rūmī because from 1221 A.D. onwards his life was spent in Qonyā (Iconium) where he remains buried. Till his 38th year he wrote no poetry; then coming under the spell of the illiterate but spiritually ecstatic Shams-i-Tabrīz, he became the greatest mystical poet of Persia: his Mathnawī *of 26,660 couplets and his* Dīwān *of 40,000 couplets dedicated to Shams-i-Tabrīz are world-famous; selected poems from the latter and all the verses from the former have been edited and translated into English by Prof. R. A. Nicholson whose comment on the Sūfīs is well-worth quoting: "as citizens they are undeniably a grave scandal and a useless burden to the State; they sap the national prosperity and demoralize the national character; but if a country's literature is rightly reckoned among its noblest heirlooms, the debt which Persia owes to the Sūfīs may balance, and perhaps overpay, these injuries."*

XXIX [1]

[The *Mathnawī* opens with the Song of the Reed: torn from its divine origin (the reed-bed), man's soul (the reed) ceases not to moan for reunion with God.]

LISTEN to what the reed is saying; and how it is complaining of separation.

Ever since I was torn from my reed-bed, my plaintive notes have caused men and women to mourn.

I need someone whose bosom is all torn with separation: to him can I truly explain the pangs of love-longing.

Whosoever is detached from his origin, looks out for the tune of reunion.

In every assembly have I been mourning, both among the happy and unhappy.

Everyone befriended me according to his concept but no one searched for the secrets (of the sorrow) within me.

My secret is not far apart from my mourning; but where is the inner ear or the eye?

The body is not hidden from the soul nor the soul from the body but none is permitted to see the soul.

This cry of the reed is fire, not air:[1] whosoever lacks this fire may he be cut off from life-supporting air ![1]

'Tis the fire of love in the hollow of the reed; 'tis the air of love in the bubbles of wine.

The reed is the companion of every one who has been torn from his companion—wherefore its notes tear the membranes of our ear.

Who ever saw a poison and an antidote like the reed ? Who ever saw a sympathizer and ardent suitor like the reed ?

The reed describes a path sodden with blood; it describes the tragedy of the love of Majnūn.[2]

Whereof the sense is reserved for the senseless, for only (their) ears can buy what the (reed's) tongue has to offer:

That in this grief, we have passed many days—and the days were full of agony.

If the days have gone, let them go: but do Thou remain, O Beloved, for there is nothing purer than Thee!

XXIX 2

[This passage and the next two are also from the Mat͟hnawī]

I died as a mineral and became a plant; I died as a plant and became an animal.

I died as an animal and became a man; why then should I fear that I'll suffer loss by dying?

One more round of evolution and I'll die as a man; and wings shall I grow to become an angel.

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1 In the original is a magnificent pun, *nīst bād*, not air; and *nīst bād*, be naught.

2 The Oriental Romeo.

But I have to transcend the grade even of angels, for "everything is perishable but His face."[1]

And so shall I sacrifice myself as an angel to become that which cannot be contained even in thought.

Namely to attain Annihilation (in God); for in the dulcet tones of an orchestra, annihilation assures me: "verily we shall return to Him."[1]

XXIX 3

WHEN he has gone to sleep and forgotten the past, do they allow the sleeper to remain in oblivion for ever?

Rather, they awaken him from his sleep and he smiles at his condition,

Saying, what grief was that which I suffered in my sleep and how did I forget my proper condition,

Not knowing that all that sorrow and ailment was a delusion and an illusion and a fantastic dream?

Likewise the world is a sleeper's dream but the sleeper thinks 'tis permanent.

Till suddenly the Day of Awakening comes and releases him from the darkness of misconception and deceit.

XXIX 4

A short time spent in the company of saints is better than a century of earnest worship.

Be thou granite or marble, the association with the pious will make thee a gem.

Engrain in thy heart's core, love for the virtuous; reserve thy heart for loving the contented (mystics).

Take not the road of frustration; there is hope. Turn not to darkness; there are suns.

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[1] From the *Qur'ān*.

Thy heart takes thee to the pure-hearted; thy body takes thee to the prison of water and earth.

Aye, get sustenance for thy heart from a man of sympathy; go and seek fortune from a Man of Destiny!

XXIX [5]

[From the Dīwān]

At every moment, that idol and trickster revealed himself in a new form—stole the heart and disappeared.

At every breath, that Friend reappeared in a new garb—of an old man and young.

Now he became Noah and with his prayers drowned the world —himself seated in the Ark;

Anon he became Abraham and stood at the head of a flaming pyre—wherefore the embers turned to roses.

Joseph he became and from Egypt sent his shirt[1]—that splendour of the world!

And like a blaze of light entered the blind eyes of Jacob[2]—and behold those eyes began to see!

He was the self same Friend who hastened to return—with the white Hand;[3]

And emerging like a snake from a wooden staff[4]—became the performer of magic.

Jonah he became and in the whale's belly plunged into the sea[5] —for the sake of purity;

Moses he became and for seeing God's Light—ascended the mountain of Ṭūr.

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1 *Qur'ān*, XII. 93.

2 *Ibid.*, XII. 84.

3 *Ibid.*, XX 22; XXVII. 12.

4 *Ibid.*, XVII. 143 : "Show Thyself to me," said Moses; and the reply was: "Me, thou canst not see."

5 *Ibid.*, XIX. 52.

At once a jug, its maker, its clay—and the reveller quaffing the jug;

He came as a buyer for the sake of the jug—broke it to bits and departed.

Himself the jug, the wine, the cup, the cup-bearer—the convivialist as well;

He quaffed the wine and came drunk to the market—that agitator of all hearts and souls.

No, no, he was the very person who exclaimed, "I am the Truth"—in the form of Manṣūr:

'Twas not Manṣūr who was sent to the gallows—alas for the belief of the ignorant!

In all these forms he came and went—diverse yet the same;

Till finally he stood forth in that Arabian form—as the Master of the world!

What Rūmī has said has not been said and will not be said—by anyone on earth;

He who denies this is naught but a pagan—the outcast of the world!

XXIX [6]

WHAT is to be done, O Muslims, for I do not know my own identity: I am neither a Christian, nor Jew, neither a Zoroastrian nor Muslim.

I hail neither from the East nor the West, neither from land nor from sea; neither from the mine of Nature nor from the revolving spheres.

Neither from dust nor from water; neither from air nor from fire; neither from the throne of God nor the earth; neither from existence nor entity.

Neither from India nor China; neither from Bulgaria nor Scythia; neither from the land of the two 'Irāqs[1]; nor from the province of Khurāsān.

Neither from this world nor the next; neither from heaven nor hell; neither from Adam nor Eve; neither from Paradise nor the garden of Eden.

The placeless is my place; the traceless is my trace; I have neither body nor soul for I belong to the soul of the Beloved.

I have renounced duality; the two worlds I see as one; One I seek, One I know, One I see, One I call.

"He is the First, He is the Last; He is the Manifest; He is the Hidden."[2] Save "*Oh, He is*"[3] and "*Oh, He who is*"[3] no other cry is mine.

I am distraught with the cup of Love; the two worlds have slipped from my hands; save revelry and spiritual carouse no other aim have I.

Were I to spend a single day of my life without Thee, from that time and that hour I'd be eternally ashamed of myself.

Could I have Thee all by myself for a single moment, I'd trample on both the worlds and throw up my arms in ecstasy.

O Shams-i-Tabrīz I have become so intoxicated in this world that apart from (spiritual) drunkenness and revelry I have no other tale to tell.

XXIX [7]

I was when the names were not and the traces of the named were not.

Through me, the names and the named were revealed—that day when "*I*" or "*We*" were not.

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[1] The Arab 'Irāq or Lower Mesopotamia; and Persian 'Irāq or Central persia.

[2] *Qur'ān.*

[3] Famous cries of darwīshes.

For a sign I got the tip of the Beloved's curl: that tip I took but I found Him not.

I searched for Him among the Christians, and on the Cross as well: on the Christians' Cross I found Him not.

searched for Him in the temple and the pagoda: in the pagoda and temple I found Him not.

In the mountains of Herāt and the heights of Qandahār—both hill and dale; but I found Him not.

With a set purpose I went to the top of Mt. Qāf: there the phoenix dwells but I found Him not.

To the Ka'bah I went with an expectant heart: in that shrine of the young and the old I found Him not.

Avicenna I plied with questions galore: beyond his range He was; and I found Him not.

Even "two bows' distance" from God I tried: in that exalted court, I found Him not.

Then I searched for Him in mine own heart: there did I find Him; elsewhere I found Him not.[1]

Save the pure-hearted Shams-i-Tabrīz, none was ever drunk or distraught or demented.

XXIX 8

In the two worlds, O Beloved, save Thee no joy did I see: many wonders I saw but a wonder like Thee I did not see.

They say that to be burnt in fire is the lot of every pagan, but deprived of the joy of burning in the fire of Thy love, save Bū Lahab,[2] none else did I see.

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1 *Cf.* 'Aṭṭār, *supra*, XXVI 1.

2 Bū Lahab was the uncle and bitter enemy of the Prophet Muḥammad "he shall soon burn in fire that flames," says the *Qur'ān* CXI3.

Much eavesdropping I did at the window of the heart: many were the words I heard but those word-producing lips I did not see.

All of a sudden Thou didst shower favours upon me—for which, save Thy infinite kindness, no other cause did I see.

O select cup-bearer, O apple of my eye, none like Thee came from outside Arabia, none like Thee in Arabia did I see.

Pour forth so much wine that I may escape from myself—for in selfness and existence naught but fatigue did I see.

O Thou who art milk and sugar, O Thou who art the sun and the moon, O Thou who art the mother and father of all, save Thee no kindred did I see.

O indestructible Love, O divine minstrel, Thou art the asylum and refuge of all : no other befitting title for Thee did I see.

We are the filings of steel and Thy love is a magnet: desired by all, in Thee no desire did I see.

XXIX[9]

On the day of my death, when my funeral passes by, think not that my heart will cling to this world.

Weep not for me nor say, "Alas ! Alas !" Thereby thou'lt fall in the devil's share, alas ! alas !

When thou seest my funeral, say not "Separated, Separated", for that is the (precise) time of my meeting and union.

When thou layest me in my grave, say not, "Farewell, Farewell", for the grave is a screen hiding the cheers and welcome of the people of Paradise.

When thou seest me lowered in the grave, think of resurrection: can setting be harmful for the sun and the moon?

It appears a setting to thee; but 'tis a rising in reality. Though the grave appear as a prison, 'tis in fact an escape for the soul.

Which seed was cast but did not sprout? Why should it be otherwise for the seed of man?

Which bucket went down but came not up full of water?
And why complain or despair? Is not thy soul like Joseph and the grave but a pit?[1]
Shut thy mouth on this side of the grave and open it beyond—
to sing thy Victory o'er Death in the spaceless air !

XXIX 10

O when 'twill be, O when 'twill be, O when 'twill be, O when
That wine will be and wine will be and wine will be, will be?
And I shall be, and I shall be, and I shall be, and I;
And she will be, and she will be, and she will be and she !

XXIX 11 [2]

O minstrel with thy sweet *qā qā*; for thee *qay*, *qay*; for me *qū*,*qū*;
For thee, *daq*, *daq*; for me, *haq*, *haq*; for thee *hay*, *hay*; for me, *hū*, *hū*.
O branch of the floral tree, O speaker of the command of "*say*"
For thee, like the dove, *bū*, *bū*; for me, like the pigeon, *kū*, *kū*.

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[1] For the emergence of Joseph from the well wherein his brothers had cast him, see *Qur'ān* XII 15 and 19.

[2] With their notes of minstrels and birds, their assonance and puns (for *HAQ* is also truth, *HŪ* also He is, *KU* also where?) these verses are untranslatable.

NAṢĪRUD'DĪN ṬŪSĪ

Ignorance is simple when a person knows that he does not know; and compound, when he does not know that he does not know; but whether the great scientist and moralist, Naṣīru'd-Dīn Ṭūsī, died 1271 A.D., is the author of this Fragment is doubtful.

XXX 1

HE who knows; and knows that he does not know shall carry his horse of pleasure to the sky.

He who knows; and knows that he knows shall also carry his ass to his destination.

But he who does not know; and does not know that he does not know shall remain eternally in compound ignorance.

XXX 2

[Who wrote this magnificent satire is also doubtful]

I shall not scratch my face with sorrow, O master. Though thou hast spoken ill of me,

I shall only speak well of thee so that both of us may have diverged equally from the truth.

MAJDU'L-MULK *v.* the JUWAYNĪ brothers.

XXXI

[From the ambitious Majdu'l-Mulk + 1283 A.D. to the Il-Khān premier Shamsu'd-Dīn Juwaynī + 683/1284.]

HARD is this fight for me, (with thee entrenched in thy place); but I am bent on the fight: I'll redden my throat or my face.[1]

to which the premier replied :

Thy thoughts are black but do not gloat—for the face thou'lt redden and also thy throat.

Finally Majdu'l-Mulk was torn to pieces by an angry mob and his limbs were distributed all over Persia whereupon, the premier's brother, 'Alā'u'd-Dīn Juwaynī wrote :

To each quarter of the land a limb of thine has gone; thou hast spread thyself over the whole kingdom in a week.

[1] As against the villain's black face, is the red face of the blushing hero.

SA'DĪ

Musharrafu'd-Dīn Sa'dī c. 610-694/1213-1295 was born at Shīrāz, studied in Baghdād, travelled from Tripoli to Kāshghar, wrote the Būstān *in 1257, the* Gulistān *in 1258, and a* Dīwān *of odes, lyrics and quatrains. Ḥāfiẓ calls him "the master of lyrical poetry". Sa'dī was a great wit. The Shīrāzīs had migrated to Tabrīz in such large numbers that a Tabrīzī said to Sa'dī : "more than dogs are the Shīrāzīs in Tabrīz." "That is curious," replied Sa'dī, "for less than a dog is the Tabrīzī in Shīrāz." To an astrologer whose wife was a flirt, Sa'dī said, "how can you know what is happening in the stellar region when you do not know what is happening in the bosom of your own home?" "When you were in your teens," said Sa'dī to a friend of his, "you were a lovely youth, but now what has happened to your face? It is all black with your beard." "Alas," replied the man, "my face has put on black in mourning for its past beauty".[1] When Hamgar[2] said : "all agree that in the arts of speech, Sa'dī and I can ne'er Imāmī[3] reach,"[4] Sa'di replied : "since Hamgar has never prayed in his whole life how can he reach the status of imāmī (leadership in prayer)?"* [5]

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1 جواب داد ندانم چه بود رویم را
مگر بماتم حسنم سیاه پوشیدست

2 & 3 The poets Hamgar and Imāmī were contemporaries of Sa'dī.

4 در شیوهٔ شاعري باجماع امم
هرگز من و سعدي به امامي نرسیم

5 There is a pun on Imāmī :

همگر چو بعمر خود نکرد دست نماز
آري چه عجب گر به امامی نرسد

XXXII[1]

[From the *Dīwān*]

[On the extinction of the 'Abbāside Caliphate and the fall of the Caliph, al Musta'ṣim in 1258 A.D.][1]

'TWOULD be appropriate were the sky to rain blood upon the earth because of the fall of the kingdom of al-Musta'ṣim, Commander of the Faithful.

O Muḥammad, if thou art to raise thy head from the earth on the Day of Judgment, then raise thy head and behold now amongst the people (of Baghdād) the advent of the Day of Judgment!

The blood from the slit throats of delicately nurtured inmates of the seraglio is trickling over the threshold and at the sight thereof our own heart's blood is flowing in torrents.

Beware of the freaks of Fortune and the vicissitudes of the Times ! Who could have thought what was like *that* would be like *this*?

O thou who didst see the glory of the Sacred House (of the 'Abbāsides), with the Caesars of Rome and the rulers of Chinese Tartary lying prostrate on the ground, now open thine eyes

And see how on that very ground whereon those monarchs rubbed their foreheads, has been spilt the blood of the descendants of the uncle of the Prophet.

Alas, should a bee settle upon the blood of those elite of mankind, the honey in its mouth would turn to poison and remain so, till the Day of Judgment!

Hereafter entertain no hopes of comfort in this world : only the impressed blackness remains in a ring from which the gem has fallen.

Blood-laden is the Tigris : were its waters to flow to the groves of Hejāz, they would knead the Meccan soil with blood.

[1] Hulāgū Khān celebrated his conquest of Baghdād, then the metropolis of the Islāmic world, by a general massacre of the people and the execution of the Caliph.

With this harrowing tale, the river's face has become marred with frowns: those eddies in its course, one would think are wrinkles.

But a Muslim whose heart burns with parting from his dear coreligionaires will naturally give vent to his feelings.

'Tis not proper, however, to mourn o'er the blood of martyrs, for their least recompense is the supreme Paradise.

Wait till the morrow of the Day of Judgment when the dead will rise from their graves, all covered with wounds.

On this earth, the soil trodden by their feet was collyrium for the eyes: on the gathering day, the blood of their eyes will be rouge for the cheeks.

If the wounded trunk rolls in blood and dust, what matters when the pure soul is in the shelter of the kindness of the Lord of the two worlds.

Rely not on this world nor to it give thy heart; for the sky, O brother, anon shows love and anon shows hate.

The revolving sphere and the stationery earth thou wouldst say are the two mill-stones and between them lies the heart of man which is being ground to powder.

Against Fate no weighty counsel can prevail; against Death the arm of courage cannot win.

When Death is lying for him, hidden in ambush, no lion in battle can draw his Indian sword from its scabbard.

If good fortune has turned against thee, trial is useless: the power of attack is not for the knight whose saddle has cracked under him.

Should you see people fighting for the carcase of this world, then, O brother, if you are wise, you'ld keep yourself aloof like the phoenix.

What is the value of this world? Our need from God is this: may He keep us firm in our faith and grant us the Kingdom of Heaven!

XXXII 2

I knew not at first how faithless and unloving thou art: better no pledge than a pledge which is made to be broken.

People ask me and chide why I have given my heart to thee; let them ask thee first why with such charm dost thou come?

O thou who hast asked me not to pursue the lovely ones of the earth, how wide is the gulf between our ideas, mine and thine.

'Tis neither a mole nor a chin nor the tip of a playful tress which hath captivated the hearts of the men of vision: what it is (God knows), 'tis a divine mystery.

Lift thy veil for no stranger can see thee: thy beauty is too vast to be contained in the tiny mirror of *his* eye.

I dare not knock at thy gate for fear of rivals: only in the rôle of a beggar can I come to thy street.

Love, beggary, rebuke, reprimand—all these are easy to bear; but insufferable is the grief of parting from thee.

Go to the desert or the prayer-hall or the riverside or the theatre: nowhere in the city is a heart left unstolen by thee.

When thou comest, I give my life to thee; and when thou comest not, I die of grief; oh then I must die in any case, whether thou comest or dost not come.

I had said that I'd tell thee my heartache when thou shouldst come, but what shall I say for the pain leaves my heart when thou dost come.

Tis necessary to remove the candle from my house and put it out so that the neighbours may not know that thou art in my house.

But why extinguish the candle for fear of rivals when the lustre of thy face proclaims that thou art in my house.

Sa'dī is not the man to release himself from the lasso (of thy tresses), for he knows that better than freedom is to be in thy bonds.

People say: go and give thy heart to someone else: no, to love two hearts with one is not for me, much less in the time of the unique Atābek.[1]

XXXII 3

O silvery cypress, art thou hiking to the desert? How faithless of thee to desert me and be going.

None ever did go with such petulance and charm. Art thou like this; or is there a motive behind such going?

Fairies hide their faces from men but O fairy-faced one (how) openly thou art going.

The world's centre of recreation is thy face. Whither for the sake of recreation art thou going?

'Tis a caressing or a killing for this slave of thine, thy sitting with him for a while or thy going.[2]

My heart is clamouring for thee. I fear 'tis (precisely) to evade its clamour thou art going.

We ourselves are at thy beck and call. Whither for plunder then art thou going?

No heart can escape being ravished by thee: the city thou hast taken; now to plunder the arid land thou art going.

Though with thee the peace of our heart is going, go in no other way for how graceful is the manner of thy going!

The eyes and heart of Sa'dī shall escort thee, lest thou shouldst think all alone thou art going!

---

1 Sa'dī's pen-name comes from his patron, Sa'd b. Abī Bakr b. Sa'd b. Zangī, *son of the Atābek* (viceroy) of Shīrāz.

2 *i.e.*, respectively.

DRIVE slowly, O camel-driver, for she who was the solace of my soul is travelling; and with her, a heart which I deemed to be mine, is going.

I am getting separated from her; I have become a patient, ailing and helpless; and this parting, thou wouldst say, is a cut[ting knife] which deep down to my bones is going.

By spells of magic and device I thought I'd hide my (gaping) wound; but it proclaims itself in the blood which all o'er my threshold is flowing.

I am like a censer now full of fire, from whose cover smoke is arising, for with a gift to me of some cold comfort, my self-willed mistress is going.

In spite of her cruelty and mouth-made vows she'll remain in my mind and speech, what though if she herself be going!

Take care of the camel-litter, O driver, and hasten not with the caravan, for with my love for that agile cypress, my soul, thou wouldst say, is departing.

"I'll rain tears," said I, "till the ground turns to mire and her camel remains sunk therein like an ass"—but even this I cannot do, since with the caravan my own life is going.

Come back and take thy seat on my eyes, O darling of my heart! Aye, listen to my plaintive cries of redress which from the earth to heaven are going.

From night to dawn I shall know no sleep; and no one's advice shall I take: now I'll be starting after my own messenger, since the reins of self-control from my grasp are slipping.

How does the soul leave the body? All manner of things have been said on this theme; but now, I am seeing with my own eyes, the departure of my soul.

" 'Twasn't proper to lament so much because of me, O Sa'dī." Thy cruelty is becoming unbearable, O faithless one; and only through the relief obtained by lamenting do my affairs get going.

XXXII[1]

O world-lighting moon of mine, why art thou annoyed with me? O my night-illuminating candle, why art thou annoyed with me?

I'll make thee my guest for a night so that I may sacrifice my life and soul to thee. I'll make thee dwell in my eyes; why art thou annoyed with me?

My darling, my life, O my queen, look at me. Come and be my guest for a night; why art thou annoyed with me?

I am thy afflicted lover, thy faithful devotee; thy real friend as long as I live; why art thou annoyed with me?

Thou art annoyed with me, thou art annoyed with me; hast thou observed some fault in me? Always hast thou pardoned my faults; why art thou annoyed with me?

See what thy love has made of me. It has made me bewildered; it has made my heart blood-laden like the tulip's; why art thou annoyed with me?

I have become distraught with love; I have passed into the legends of the world (as the ideal lover). Thou art the candle and I am the moth; why art thou annoyed with me?

If I die because of my love for thee, my blood shall be on thy hands. I'll hold thee for this, on the reckoning day; why art thou annoyed with me?

Oh my cypress of lovely stature, thy ruby lips are my honey. Why art thou, my charming sweetheart, why art thou annoyed with me?

Thy eye-brows are like the new moon, Oh my love; and I am Sa'dī, thy old lover, thy friend and well-wisher; why art thou annoyed with me?

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[1] This lyric is wanting in the Teheran edition of the works of Sa'dī.

XXXII 6

[From the *Būstān*]

THOUGH I have said much in favour of doing good, good should not be done indiscriminately.

Suck the blood of the blood-sucker and strip him of his wealth, for 'tis best to pluck the plumes of a bird of prey.

Whoso is in active strife with thy master, shouldst thou supply him with stone and stick?

Pluck the thorn-bearing shrub by the root and cultivate naught but the fruit-bearing tree.

Invest that man with authority whose hand will not lie heavy on the poor.

Extend not thy forgiveness to a tyrant: kindness to him is cruelty to the world.

He who will set the world in flames, put out his lamp of life One man in fire is better than to see everyone get branded.

He who is kind to a robber plunders the entire caravan with his own hands.

Have the heads of tyrants struck off: cruelty to the cruel is the height of benevolence and justice.

XXXII 7

[From the *Gulistān*]

(On the art of speaking)

A speaker, if old and experienced, will think before he speaks.

Speak not without thinking: not speaking quickly or slowly, but speaking well is speaking.

Think well, then speak; and stop before thou art told to stop.

By his speech is man superior to cattle; and if thy speech be improper, the cattle is superior to thee.

XXXII 8

THOUGH silence is a merit in the eyes of the wise, when expedient, 'tis best to speak.

Two things are contrary to reason: not to speak, when to speak; to speak when not to speak.

XXXII 9

TILL a person has spoken, his faults and merits lie concealed.

Deem not every thicket to be empty: a leopard *there* may be lying asleep.

XXXII 10

(On good company)

IN the bath, a kind friend gave me once a tiny cake of fragrant earth to try.

"Art thou musk or amber?" said I, "for thy heart-entrancing smell has deprived me of my other senses."

"I am mere insignificant earth," it replied, "but have remained long in a bed of roses.

The effect of good company has made me worthy—otherwise I am the same worthless earth that I am."

XXXII 11

(On Immortality)

MANY a man lies buried in the earth of whose existence on earth all trace has gone.

That sturdy old frame which was consigned to earth, was so eaten by earth that even its bones remained not.

But the auspicious name of Nūs͟hīrwān still lives, though long is the time since Nūs͟hīrvān has gone.

Do good, O listener, and make the most of thy life—before the call comes and thou art gone!

XXXII 12

CROESUS is dead though he possessed forty treasures: Nūshīrwān did not die because he left a good name behind.

XXXII 13

(On injustice)

WERE the king to eat a single apple without paying for it, his staff will pluck the whole apple-tree by its roots.

Were the king to eat five eggs without giving their price, his escort will put a thousand hens on the spit.

XXXII 14

(On contentment)

IF the man of God eats half a loaf, he reserves the other half for the poor;

But if the king swallows a whole country, his earth-hunger grows and he longs for another.

XXXII 15

(On the rights of the poor)

THE king is the guardian of his subjects though they guard him and keep him in glory.

The sheep are not for the shepherd, 'tis the shepherd who is for the sake of the sheep.

XXXII 16

PILGRIMS from different lands flock to the Ka'bah because it has been made the centre of the needy.

The great must pay the price of their greatness, for who flings stones at a fruitless tree?

XXXII 17

(On fellow-feeling)

THE sons of Adam are limbs of the same body, all created from the selfsame seed.

When one limb receives hurt, the others must smart with pain.

O thou who art indifferent to the sufferings of men, no man can call thee a man.

XXXII 18

(Our nature is unchangeable)

INSTRUCTION is effective if the basic nature of an object be sublime;

But no polish can improve a blade whose iron is impure.

Give the dog a bath in the seven seas: the wetter it is, the dirtier will it be.

Take the ass of Jesus to Mecca: when it returns, it will still be an ass.

XXXII 19

WERE the cloud to rain the Water of Life, even so from the willow's branch thou'lt eat no fruit.

Associate not with the vulgar: from the mat-cane's stalk, no juice of sugar wilt thou drink.

XXXII 20

WERE he to feed fire for a hundred years, let the fire-worshipper fall therein—and the fire will burn him completely.

XXXII 21

A wolf's cub will be naught but a wolf, though he be reared in the company of men.

XXXII 22

(On dealing with evil)

O philosopher, fear him who fears thee or else thou shalt have to reckon with him a hundred times in battle.

Before he gives the snake a chance to bite him on the leg, the peasant crushes with a stone the head of the snake,

Hast thou not seen how when a cat grows desperate; it tears out with its claws the eyes of a leopard?

XXXII 23

To do good to the bad is to do bad to the good.

XXXII 24

(Honesty is the best policy)

In righteousness is God's will done: never did I see a man who took the right path go astray!

XXXII 25

Be pure and fear none O brother: 'tis the unclean cloth which the washerman beats on stones.

XXXII 26

(Safety first)

Though much profit accrues from the sea, if thou wantest safety, seek it on land.

XXXII 27

(A friend in need is a friend indeed)

He who takes thee in by the hand when thou art down and out, he is thy friend indeed.

XXXII 28

('Tis darkest before dawn)

Lose not heart when thy work does'nt prosper: in a pitch-dark cavern lies the Water of Life.

ʻIRĀQĪ

Fakhru'd-Dīn Ibrāhīm ʻIrāqī, the author of a dīwān *of mystical lyrics and of the prose-treatise,* Lamaʻāt, *travelled from Persia to Multān where he spent 25 years, and then from India to Asia Minor where he died in 688/1289. His grave is in Damascus by the side of the Arabian mystic Ibnu'l-ʻArabī. On seeing those two graves side by side a pilgrim remarked: "that is the Persian Gulf, and this is the Arabian Sea."*

XXXIII 1

[This magnificent poem was composed by ʻIrāqī in Multān in his 18th or 19th year]

THE first measure of wine poured into the cup was borrowed from the languorous eyes of the cup-bearer.

When they found the merry-makers self-conscious, they poured into the cup the wine of unconsciousness.

The wine-like lips of the Beloved received the name of "the brimming cup", and a kiss from those lips, the name of the "Lovers' wine".

The tips of the tresses of the Beloved found no rest because of remorse—so many were the hearts they had made restless.

To that exclusive assembly they admitted the good and the bad; and in the bar-room, when the bowl went round, they made no discrimination between the elite and the vulgar.

When they threw the ball of beauty in the polo-field, in a single gallop they won the trophy of the two worlds.

When the intoxicated required dessert, they made the lips and eyes of the Beloved serve as sugar and almonds.

From those lips desired by all hearts, what those who had already parted with their hearts received were words chosen for their harshness.

In order that at every moment they may ensnare a heart, they asked the Beloved for a loan of her tresses.

With their coquettish glances they spoke a hundred words to the soul; with their eyebrows they sent two hundred signals to the heart.

After giving a warning in private that the secret was not to be disclosed to anyone else, they communicated it to the whole world.

Wherever in the world they found pain and grief, *that* they took and combined and gave to the mixture, the name of LOVE.

When they themselves gave the secret away, why do they lay the blame on '*Irāqī* and sully his name?

XXXIII 2

OH Idol of mine, show me the path of the heedless vagabond, for long is the road and distant the goal of saintliness.

When in prayer I touched the ground with my forehead I heard the Earth complain: "with thy insincere prostrations, thou hast ruined me completely."

I went to circumambulate the Ka'bah but they barred my way to the shrine, saying: "what hast thou done out of doors to entitle thee to come inside the house?"

Thy enemies are not destined to be slain by thee: this privilege is for thy friends on whose heads thou mayest practise and improve thy swordsmanship.

In which religion is this, in which nation is this that a lover is put to death by his own Beloved, saying: "why art thou loving Me?"

When I knocked at the temple's door, a voice of welcome said from inside, "come in, come in, O '*Irāqī*, thou art one of our own elite."

XXXIII 3

BUT for thy love, the need of Life I do not see, I do not see; save thee a beloved whom I can take to my soul, I do not see, I do not see.

In me, patience and rest I do not find, I do not find; in thee, kindness and love I do not see, I do not see.

Grant me a favour and show me thy face, since for the pain which I have, a remedy save thy sight, I do not see, I do not see.

Come soon if thou wishest to see me, for having parted from thy charming presence, the prospects of a lengthening life for myself, I do not see, I do not see.

Hold my hand, O friend, for in such a whirling sea have I fallen that an end to its depth I do not see, I do not see.

By way of kindness and sympathy, come and put my affairs in order, for he who can rescue me from this muddled state, save thee, I do not see, I do not see.

Show '*Irāqī* the road to thy court, for in the whole world a wanderer so lost in love and absent-minded as he, I do not see, I do not see.

AMĪR KHUSRAW

The poet-laureate and "parrot of India", Amīr Khusraw was born at Patiyālī in 651/1253 and remains buried in Delhi where he died in 725/1324. He saw the reigns of seven kings; and twenty-one of his works, including five dīwāns *of Persian poetry still survive. Amīr Khusraw resembles Fayḍī, Akbar's poet-laureate, in many ways; and a Khusraw academy is now being formed to re-introduce Khusraw to the world as a thinker, historian, musician, mystic and nationalist, proud of his Indian origin and deeply conscious of the cultural greatness of India. If two couplets of Ḥanẓalat* (I_2 supra) *made the assherd Aḥmad "do one more brave deed before his death", half-a-couplet of Khusraw put another Aḥmad, the Mullā, to death—such is Persian poetry. Says the* Tuzuk *of Jahāngīr* : [1]

"*Wearing a tilted cap, the saint Nīẓāmu'd-Dīn Awliyā was watching the Hindus bathe in the Jamna:*

"Every sect has its own creed and ritual; behold how their path winds to a crooked stream"[2]

said the saint; whereupon, his disciple Amīr Khusraw supplied the antiphony :

"Aye and mine runs straight to a crooked cap."

My seal-engraver, Mullā 'Alī Aḥmad", continues the Emperor Jahāngīr, "became so ecstatically happy while quoting this incident to me that he actually died on the spot, in my own presence."

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1 'Alīgarh ed. p. 81.

2 هر قوم راست راهي، ديني و قبله گاهي

3 من قبله راست كردم بر سمت كج كلاهي

XXXIV$_1$

THE cask has become empty but my thirst for wine remains unslaked: drink thy own blood, O my heart, if pure wine be wanting.

The creaking of the chain of Majnūn is the orchestra of lovers: to appreciate its music is quite beyond the ears of the wise.

My love for that tyrant of a sweetheart is enough to kill me. O sphere, take thou no trouble: where the executioner is present what need is there for a butcher?

Tell the king to shed my blood and ask the captain to strike off my head: to retain life by abandoning the beloved is not in the religious code of Friends.

Yes, O Reason, come not forward with thy sympathy: for travelling on the path of Love, no equipment is better than insanity.

If I cannot see her, at least I can think of her, and so be happy: to light the beggar's hut no candle is better than moonlight.

O infidel, thou who makest a prey of thy lovers, go slow for a while: a helpless deer (like me) cannot contend aganist the cruel darts of a Turkish archer (like thee).

Thou hast to die thirsty, O my heart, think not of relief from her chin, for shouldst thou try her dimple-*pit* 'twould give not water but blood.

Thou didst say, "O *Khusraw*, I shall reveal myself to thee in thy dreams." Reserve this favour for strangers, as those who know thee have neither sleep nor dreams.

XXXIV$_2$

I am a pagan and a worshipper of love: Islām I do not need; every vein of mine has become taunt like a wire, the pagan's girdle I do not need.

Arise from my bedside, O simple physician! The only cure for the patient of love is the sight of his beloved—other than this no medicine does he need.

O my heart, she'd be visiting thee after all when tomorrow in the market-place of love, she comes to *slay* thee: what happier news dost thou need?

The cry of the nightingale does not decrease when the rose vanishes from the garden: love springs from something basic and not from skin-deep beauty which it does not need.

If there be no pilot in our boat, tell him not to be: we have God in our midst; the pilot of the sea we do not need.

The people of the world say that *Khusraw* worships idols. So he does, so he does; the people, he does not heed; the world, he does not need.

XXXIV$_3$

I have just had the news that my sweetheart will visit me to-night: be my head a sacrifice to that road which will bring her riding to me.

All the deer of the desert have already lost their head, hoping thou'lt come one day and make them thy prey.

The attraction of love will not leave thee unmoved: shouldst thou not come to my funeral, then thou'lt come to my grave.

My life is hanging on my lips; come and keep me going; for after I am gone, what purpose would be served by thy coming?

In a single visit thou didst take from *Khusraw* his religion, heart and patience: shouldst thou call in such fashion twice or thrice, Oh then, what will happen to him?

XXXIV$_4$

THOU hast taken my soul from my body; and in the midst of my soul thou remainest still ! Thou hast given me all manner of pain; and my only cure thou remainest still !

Openly thou hast rent my bosom; but concealed in that self-same bosom thou remainest still.

With shedding tears, we have melted away like salt; and thou, with thy smiles, art raining showers of confetti still !

With the dagger of thy coquettish glance, thou hast ravished the kingdom of my heart; but lo and behold, in that ruined heart thou reignest still !

Strangely enough there is not a trace of the victim's blood on thy skirt though that remorseless blood-shedding of thine continueth still.

Thou didst assess thyself at the value of the two worlds; raise thy price, 'tis an under-estimate still !

The soul has escaped from the shackles of the body but the heart lies imprisoned in thy tresses still.

Old age and love-making do not go well together; but O *Khusraw*, thou remainest proof 'gainst my reasoning still !

XXXIV5

LAST night thou didst appear to me in my sleep and offer me a foaming bowl of wine.

And now I find myself drowsy and drunk; nay, I am in agonies of death, for thou hadst come drunk and distraught in my dream.

So confused am I that I am about to fall in an eternal sleep for was it a vision or reality which I saw? Was I awake or asleep?

Thou hadst come to deprive me of my roasted heart, nor can this be reckoned bad of thee, for thou wert drunk and good roast meat goes well with drink.

After a dismal day I had to face a dead dark night but it has suddenly become bright, for thou hast come to me and thou art a moon which is full !

When they sought a reason for my weeping, it was thou whom they saw, reflected in my pool of tears.

If thou hast been slow in responding to love, in drawing the sword, I am happy to say thou hast been as quick as a repartee.

Where wert thou, O star of good fortune, for as a moon thou didst go and as a sun thou hast come.

The (tolerant) heart of *Khusraw* was not offended with thee, O my love, if in going away thou didst show all celerity.

XXXIV6

O thou whose beautiful face is the envy of the idols of Āzar,[1] thou remainest superior to my praise, (praise thee as I may.)

All over the world have I travelled; many a maiden's love have I tasted; many a beauty-star have I seen; but thou art something different (and unique if I may say).

A face lovelier than thine my eye hath not seen; art thou the sun or the moon or Venus or Jupiter? [What thou art, 'tis hard to say].

Ever since the sky began making[2] images on earth, on no one else was such charm bestowed : art thou a fairy or an angel, a daughter of Adam or a nymph? (What thou art I cannot say.)

I have become thee; thou hast become me : I have become the body; thou hast become the soul; so that "I am different from thee, thou art different from me," none hereafter may be able to say.

More agile than a fairy, more delicate than the petals of the rose: more a miracle than a maiden art thou—altogether beyond what the tongue can say.

I have seen thy smiling face; I have seen thy ruby lips of Badakhshān; I have seen the pearls of thy teeth—two threads of lustrous gems thou wouldst say.

---

1 Abraham's father and a famous idol-maker.

2 *i.e.*, creating men.

O comfort and composure of life, agile, with a stature like the cypress; go not in in such fashion, trailing thy skirt, for the peace of my soul thou takest away.

Thou art going bent on recreation; thou art going to take the fresh air of the desert; nay, to take my life and soul thou art going—such is thy code of responding to love; (it goes against my grain to say).

The whole world has been plundered by thee; the people of all lands have been enchanted by thee; from those dark narcissus-eyes of thine have come all the rites of idolatry; (what need is there for me to say?)

As a beggar and a stranger has *Khusraw* come wandering to thy city: may be that for the sake of God thou'lt pity a stranger and a beggar and turn him not from thy door away.

XXXIV₇

SHARPER far than the sword of Maḥmūd are the glances cast by the eyes of Ayāz.[1]

XXXIV₈

[This couplet exists as an inscription in the Audience-Hall of Shāh Jahān in the Fort of Delhi]

IF there is a paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this.

XXXIV₉

SEEING her bathe at the river-side, I shouted and cried, "A lass ! a lass !".

"You are right," she said, "may you always cry, 'Alas ! Alas ! Alas ! Alas !' "[2]

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[1] The favourite page-boy of Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna.

[2] I have tried to reproduce the pun in the original Persian whose literal translation is:

I went to enjoy the beauty of the river-side and saw a Hindu lady at the ghāt.

"Oh, idol of mine," said I, "what is the price of your tresses ?" and she replied, '*dur dur mūye*'—'*go away you wretch*' (so in Hindī) or '*every single hair of mine is a pearl*' (so in Persian)".

XXXIV$_{10}$

I went to a cave in the hill and wept bitterly at the loss of my friends whom Death had taken away.

"*Where, Oh where are they*?" I asked; and the echo from the cave replied, "*where are they*?"

KHWĀJŪ

Kamālu'd-Dīn Khwājū Kirmānī of whom Ḥāfiẓ says, "though Sa'dī is the master of lyrical poetry my verses are after the style of Khwājū's,"[1] *was born* in *679-1281 and died after 744/1343. He enjoyed the patronage of the Muzaffarī rulers of Shīrāz and the Jalā'irse of Baghdād; and in addition to lyrics has left 5 mathnawīs.*

XXXV[1]

To men of vision the kingdom of Solomon is but the blowing wind; or rather he who has no kingdom at all is Solomon.

They say that the Earth rests on Water; but look deeply into the matter, O master, and thou'lt find it resting on air.

At every moment the love of the sky shifts to another person. What can be done when such is the way of this wretch?

Give not thy heart to this flirting hag of a world for 'tis a bride in the tie of many a groom.

Remember this saying of mine, for thou wilt say after me: "let him be remembered from whom this saying I remember.

'Once Shaddād built a palace whose bricks were of gold; and now of bricks moulded from the dust of Shaddād's head is the palace of the king.' "

The land of Baghdād is weeping for the Caliphs who are gone: if not its tears, what else are these waters of the Tigris coursing through Baghdād?

If the skirt of the mountain is blooming with red anemones, go not that way, for they have sprung from the blood of the heart of Farhād.

---

1 استاد غزل سعدی ست پیش همه کس اما
دارد سخن حافظ طرز سخن خواجو

And like the narcissus open thy eye and see how many a face like the rose and a stature like the box-tree lies buried in the bosom of the earth.

Pitch not thy tent of friendship in this old caravanserai basically unseasonable whose ground is groundless.

From this world nothing accrues to Khwājū but sorrow: aye, joy is reserved for him who hath freed himself from this world.

XXXV 2

FROM Thee to Thee shall I tell the secret with the speech of speechlessness; to Thee from Thee shall I seek the path with the trace of tracelessness.

How canst Thou be concealed from the eye for like the day shines Thy sun-bright face through the dark-blue veil of the sky?

Thou art like a subtle thought which requires no proof; Thou art like a noble verse which requires no interpretation.

How can I turn my eyes away from Thee for Thou art the lamp of my eyes? How can I remain apart from Thee for Thou art in the midst of my soul?

We are but rays and Thou art the candle; we are but elements and Thou art the soul; we are but drops and Thou art the sea; we are but uncut stones and Thou art the mine.

Like Thee I have read no verse, point by point, original; like Thee I have seen no form, from head to foot, ideal.

When Thou seest my offences, cast also a kindly glance at me—for kings do not disdain to look at their criminal subjects.

What has my weak heart gained from the dance and music of the mystics? Naught but sighs. What has it received from the purple wine (of spirituality)? Naught but wine-like tears.

To njure the afflicted heart of *Khwājū* with the darts of Thy glances is neither within the pale of friendship nor the convention of kindness.

XXXV₃

TILL those languorous eyes go to sleep think not that mischief in this world will ever be asleep.

How delightful is the season of spring when my narcissus-eyed beloved quaffs the bowl of wine and lies beside the garden asleep!

The drinkers of the morning draught, full of drink; the minstrels, full of zest; the revellers, senseless and the sentinel asleep.

The camel has flung aside the litter, and the driver, unaware; the brigand has gone off with the merchandise, and the caravan, asleep.

When thou risest from a sound sleep and makest thy tresses curly, behold then on thy purple face, two black dragons asleep.

I have fallen on the ground and am resting my head against thorns; thou art lying on a silken bed, supported by pillows, asleep.

For me, two eyes full of blood-shot tears, awake; for thee, a pair of narcissi, drunken and languorous, asleep.

By the knights[1] (I swear) that right through the drawn-ouy *nights*, thou'lt find *Khwājū*, from dusk to dawn, lying on the threshold,[2] asleep.

XXXV 4

(Quatrains)

WHEN the darling of the garden unveiled her face; and the violet gave another curl to its curly tresses;

I said to the cuckoo, "lo, here is spring": whereupon it cried, "*where? where? where,? where*?" (*kū, kū* ; *kū kū*)[3]

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[1] & [2] براستان and برآستان compound homonymy.

[3] Cf. 'Umar-i-Khayyām, XVIII 19, *supra*.

XXXV 5

Each morning when the rose discloses itself from the bud,
and the birds awaken the dawn with their chorus songs;

Then, O minstrel, even as this intoxicated nightingale, this
bubbling and babbling wine[1], insists, fill high a bowl for
thyself and *recite, recite, recite, recite.*[2]

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1 & 2 This quatrain, with its puns, is a thing of beauty, for "*qulqul*", as one word, is the gurgling noise made by wine in the neck of a bottle when poured out; and "*qulqul*", split into two words, "*qul*; *qul*", means "*recite*; *recite*". Further "*qul*" (*recite*) occurs *four times* as the first word in the verses of the last chapter of the *Qur'ān*. Puns are not easy to render: this is my *annotation and interpretation* of the quatrain:

"Every morning when the rose unveils itself and the intoxicated nightingale begins to sing; and the proud peacock to dance; and the *humble-bee* says to them, '*humble be* !';

The wine froths and foams; and the bees *murmur*; and the doves moan that the minstrel should be so *late* in *humming* his lays."

IBN-I-YAMĪN

Borrowing an idea of Rashīdu'd-Dīn Waṭwāt died 573/1177.

Why I have been seated (not on the dais but) behind every worthless fellow has a fine inner significance,

Thy assembly is like the ocean wherein the weeds float on the surface but the pearls are at the bottom of the sea.

XXXVI

Ibn-i-Yamīn died, 769/1367 says

'Tis customary in the world that every dilettante should be ranked superior to a litterateur

Exactly as in the ocean where the weeds float on the surface but the pearls are at the bottom of the sea.

‘UBAYD-I-ZĀKĀNĪ

Niẓāmu'd Dīn ‘Ubaydu'llāh, known as ‘Ubayd-i-Zākānī c.700–772/1300–1371, the author of a Dīwān *and of many satirical works in prose and poetry, was a protege of the ruler of Shīrāz, Shaykh Abū Isḥāq Injū+747/1346; and later on of the Jatā'ir ruler of Tabrīz and Baghdād. Shaykh Uways, 757-776/1356-1374. "'Tis out of fear," says ‘Ubayd in his* Ethics of the Aristocracy *that sons obey their sires, the servants, their masters and the subjects, their kings; wherefore the empire of the just Nūshīrwān fell but of the tyrant, Hulāgū lasted for 90 years." ‘Ubayd spared no one with his satires: when a doctor lay dying, "he was buying," says ‘Ubayd, "what he had been dispensing all his life." The Ethiopian cannot change his skin nor the leopard his spots, and the clergy will always prey upon the laity—this is the moral of a magnificent satire entitled "the Cat and the Mice," wherein the Cat is the proctor and prohibitionist and the mice, the gay wine-drinking laity.*

XXXVII 1

[From the mathnawī, *Mūshwa Gurbah*]

BY the decree of Heaven, there was a cat in Kirmān like unto a dragon,

With a belly like a drum and a breast like a shield; of leonine tail and lupine teeth.

One day it went to a tavern to prey on mice;

And lay in ambush behind a barrel of wine as a thief waylays in the prairie.

Unawares a mouse emerged from a hole in the wall; jumped on a barrel of wine;

Lowered its head; drank till it became drunk; and roared like a roaring lion:

"Where is the cat that I may strike off its head and stuff its skin with straw?

A cat is a dog in my eyes: let it come and meet me in a field, face to face."

The cat overheard this and held its breath; then, sharpening its teeth and claws

Leapt upon the mouse as a leopard leaps on an ox.

"I am thy slave," said the mouse, "Oh, forgive me my sins:

I was drunk and foolish—the drunk are ever foolish."

The cat made a meal of that mouse and with a jaunty stride went to the mosque and prayed:

"Oh God, forgive this penitent who'll never more tear a mouse with its teeth."

It prayed and lamented so much that tears fell from its eyes.

Behind the pulpit was a mouse who quickly brought the news to all the mice:

"Rejoice and be happy! The cat has repented: it has become a hermit and a saint and a good Musulmān.[1]

That compendium of virtues is now in the mosque, praying and mourning and imploring."

Thereupon seven[2] select mice, each one a landlord and a squire, were so moved by love

That each one of them took a tray of gifts for the cat.

(Unable to resist the temptation), the cat leapt upon the mice, like a champion on the day of battle.

Five of those squires and princelings did the cat seize;

But two managed to escape. The sad news spread

From mouse to mouse till it reached the ears of their king:

"May our souls be thy sacrifice! Behold the tyranny of the cat

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[1] This verse has become a proverb.

[2] This is a mystic number and has been used by the Ismā'īlīs for allegorical interpretation.

Hitherto it was satisfied by taking one of us per annum but now its greed has increased:

It takes no less than five of us at a time, aye five at a time—now that it has become a saint and a good Musulmān !"

When they had unfolded their hearts' grief, "Oh friends," said the king,

"Such vengeance shall I take that it will become a legend in the world."

Thereupon seated on an elephant (of war), with a yelling army of mice, before and behind,

He gave battle. The cat was caught alive; and bound with ropes and cords

Was brought to the gallows. "Hang this foolish black-faced dog of a cat!", ordered His Majesty.

When the cat saw the King of the mice, it boiled over with rage like a seething cauldron.

Like a lion it sat on its knees; and biting the cords with its teeth,

Hurled the executioners flat on the ground.

The army took to its heels; and the king took flight

Neither the elephant remained nor the rider of the elephant—nor crown, throne, treasury and palace.

This strange and curious tale is a souvenir from that writer of stories, '*Ubayd-i-Zākānī*.

XXXVII 2

[Lyrics from the *Diwān*]

I am leaving the land of Shīrāz and am taking the risk of losing my life: oh, how full of anguish is my heart at this unavoidable journey.

Beating my head with my hands; and with my feet sinking in mire—in such wise am I going. Oh what will happen to me and what will accrue to me from this journey?

Now crying like a love-lorn nightingale; anon tearing my collar open like a heart-sick bud—(such is the start of this journey!)

If I go from the city, I shall go from comfort to discomfort: if I pass out of the city-gate I shall pass out of life.

Leaving my inner self, heart, friends and S̲h̲īrāz behind, I am going on and on —gazing piteously, with eyes turned back, at the fading city.

I find no strength in my hands when I hold the reins; I have no knowledge of my legs how they are making this journey.[1]

So afflicted am I today and torn with the pangs of love that neither the counsel of friends is doing me good nor the advice of my parents.

O '*Ubayd*, this is not a journey which I wanted: having pushed me in, the sky is pulling me now by the chain of Fate and Destiny.

XXXVII [3]

ONCE again I am losing my head; once more I am playing with my heart.

She is a princess and I am a commoner; she is a queen and I am a beggar.

Tall of stature; with tresses like the lasso; queen of beauty; ruler of hearts.

With eye-brows like the bow; of slender waist; unkind; glamorous; treacherous;

What a charming coquette! Graceful and straight like the cypress but what a juggler and a cheat!

Without her, the sun gives no light; without her, the world has no purity.

Where'er her ruby lips begin to smile, there sugar ceases to command any value.

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[1] This hemistich is a quotation from Sa'dī.

Always in my heart and never out of mind, I hold pleasant communion with her all the time.

When I go to her, I go to a physician as it were, hoping to find relief for my aching heart.

Everyone has a complaint 'gainst his enemy; I alone have a complaint 'gainst his friend.

If the eyes of '*Ubayd* have a good look at her, she'll be protected (like a charm) against all calamity.

SALMĀN-I-SĀWAJĪ

The celebrated Qaṣīdah-writer, Jalālu'd-Dīn Muḥammad, known as Salmān-i-Sāwajī, lived from 700 to 778 A.H. /1300-1376. Ḥāfiẓ calls him "King and Master of Poetry"; and the anthologist Dawlatshāh, after citing two opening verses from one of Salmān's odes (infra *XXXV* 2, *verses 1-2) says: "should they give the entire province of Rayy for the sake of these* 2 *verses, it would still be an under-payment."*[1] *Though Salmān enjoyed the princely patronage of the Jalā'ir rulers of Tabrīz and Baghdād, Shaykh Ḥasan Nūyān 736-757/1336-1356, his queen, Dilshād Khātūn and their son, Shaykh Uways 757-776/1356-1374, "why dont they budget my salary and allowances?" asks the poet and "why cant they give me a horse which I can actually ride, for the horse sent to me as a royal gift is 30 years senior to me in age and it is disrespectful to sit upon one's elders."*

XXXVIII 1

WITH her eyes, glances, face and eyebrows, my mistress deprives me of rest from the body, sleep from the eyes, senses from the brain and brain from the head.

With her lips, words, face and mole, there remains no need for sugar, wine, moon and night.

The tips of her tresses, her pretty face, fresh down and ruby lips are like the fragrant lily, the full moon, a stimulant for the heart and a pearl-producing oyster.

Never exempted from thinking, dreaming, talking of her is the soul in the body, reason in the head, speech in the lips and breath in the bosom.

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[1] اگر ملک ری بتمامي جهت این دو بیت صله دهند
هنوز بخيلي کرده باشند

To make my body, person, eyes and face a sacrifice at the dust of her feet, I exhale breath, offer my head, rain pearls[1] and scatter gold[2].

How fragrant is the dust on the shoe of the king's horse! Has it received the impress of the sweet lips, the musky down, the delicate face and the scented hair of my sweetheart!

Of celestial status, angelic rank, a perfect chief and king; dispenser of luck; companion of fortune; ornament of the country; bulwark of religion.

In might like Fate; in command like Destiny is Shaykh Ḥasan Nūyān, the world-conqueror, world-possessor, world-bestower, world-protector.

With his rank, might, stability, justice and equity he is Farīdūn[3], Jamshīd[4], Nūshīrwān, Parwīz[5] and Alexander.

With his judgment, favours, countenance and justice become bright the lamp of the sun, the disc of the moon, the waters of the sea and the face of the earth.

With the grace of his words, pen, hand and nature, the bee makes honey; the cane, sugar; the oyster, pearl; the rock, diamond.

With his order, judgment, statesmanship and policy, the sphere has rest and motion, command and prohibition, unloosing and binding, good and evil.

Because of his justice, equity and bounty what religion has, is not available to the brain from reason, to reason from soul, to soul from nature, to nature from the sun.

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1 *i.e.*, pearls of tears

2 *i.e.*, the sallow hue of appearance.

3 The first king of the legendary Kayānian dynasty who ruled for 500 years !

4 The last king of the legendary Pīshdādian dynasty who ruled for 1000 years !

5 Grandson of Nūshīrwān, who ruled from 590 to 628 A.D

Thy essence has adorned the throne, army, country and religion just as reason adorns life, the soul, body; manners, spirit; and nobility, substance.

With thy good fortune, glory, grandeur and stability, wealth gives crown; nobility, throne; safety, ring; and enjoyment, drink.

(Protected by thy justice) the pheasant, quail, partridge and ringdove have become good-omened like the phoenix, auspicious of wing, hunting like the eagle, flying like the falcon.

Through thy uncles, paternal and maternal; through thy father and grandfather, thou hast inherited perfection of spirit, goodness of disposition, grandeur, rank, pomp and glory.

With fraud, trick, deceit and plot, 'tis not possible to remove scent from the musk, colour from the ruby, heat from fire and light from the sun.[1]

Because of thy justice, equity and kind disposition, I do not see during thy reign anything weeping save the bowl, moaning save the drum, waterless save wine, thin save the reed.

In that hour when with war, battle, combat and skirmish death becomes master; life, destroyer; the times, hell; the field, Resurrection;

With clouds of dust and waves of blood; with (red) riot and revolt, the earth becomes sky; the land, sea; the horse, a ship; and calamity, anchor;

With fear of the arrow, the flash of the sword, the mounting dust, the flowing blood, the face becomes yellow, the ideas green (and vain); the sky, black; the earth, red;

Now flying, now slipping, now writhing, now trembling the soldier's head, the horse's hoof, the spear's body, the dagger's heart;[2]

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1 The *musk,ruby. fire* and *sun* are metaphors for s̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Ḥasan Nūyān.

2 The heart of a dagger is the middle part of its blade.

Thou dost attack the heart, rank, file and flank of the enemy with Victory as guide, Fate as follower, friends advancing and foe retreating;

Thy mace, sword, spear and dagger come into action, bent on death and destruction; extinction, before; annihilation behind.

Then they throw, bend, seize and grasp, the combatants, their shields; the chiefs, their necks; the officers, their helmets; and the knights, their bridles.

Under thee, a steed, swift-footed, world-traversing, fiery-faced, fortunate, auspicious, well-omened, high starred.

At the time of charging, running, racing and fighting, in speed like fancy, in bounds like lightning, in gallop like a torrent, in flight like a storm.

Like unto it in speed, flight, going and running, there does not pass the breeze o'er the land, the wind o'er the sea, the cloud o'er a mountain, the torrent down a valley.

O chief, king and monarch thy virtues cannot be described in a hundred decades, by a hundred hands with a hundred pens in a hundred books.

Though my speech be graceful, fluent and attractive, is there anyone in truth who like thee has so lovely, pretty and heart-ravishing a queen?

By thy glorious good fortune to match my verse she is the match: fine, bright, clear, good, sweet, smart and neat.

Till action, effect, orbit and motion belong to persons, elements, spirits, sphere and the revolving stars

May persons, elements, spirits, sphere and stars be obedient, dependent, subordinate, subject and submissive to thee.

And may the kindness of God on all occasions night and day be thy helper, defender, guide, friend, protector and companion.

XXXVIII 2

THY ruby lips deposited the cash of thy life in a *casket of pearls*: the deposit being precious 'twas appropriately hidden in a *narrow mouth*.

For that fair casket a ruby lock was provided by thy lips; then thy musky mole came forward to be a seal on that lock!

A subtle idea, finer than hair, came into my mind and was named, "Thy waist".

Thy face disclosed an object sweeter than sugar, in producing fine words: thy ruby lips named it, "Thy mouth".

To describe thy stature became a fine problem for the mind 'twas resolved by the metaphor of "The moving cypress":

How long like the lamp shalt thou immediately kill those moths who are freely offering their head and heart to thee?

O heart, hope not for Profit from the melancholy of Love for the basis of its structure is Loss.

Before God put life into dust, he had kneaded my life with the dust from the door of my freind.

XXXVIII 3

THERE is another matter which I may put to His Majesty if it does not offend him.

How far is it proper that in the pay roll of salaried officers there should be no entry against my name?

In an age of promiscuous patronage why should I not have a fixed salary and allowance?

XXXVIII 4

THERE can be no doubt that as long as this servant is alive his means of subsistence will depend on thy bounty;

But I wish it may be budgeted and defined for I have no other source of income.

XXXVIII 5

THEY are giving me a pony, short, old and lazy: 'tis not a horse on which I can ride.

Verily 'tis superior to me in age by 30 years; and it is disrespectful to sit upon one's elders.

XXXVIII 6

YESTERDAY with my vows I broke the cup of wine; today with the wine-cup I am breaking my vows.

HĀFIZ

Shamsu'd-Dīn Muhammad Hāfiz, the greatest lyrical poet of Persia, died in 792/1390 in his birthplace, Shīrāz, where his quiet life had been spent amidst stirring events. Accustomed to the benign rule of Shaykh Abū Ishāq Injū who, even on the night preceding his downfall in 1352 was not prepared to defer till tomorrow the pleasures of today, Hāfiz was not too pleased when the Muzaffarid Prince Mubārizu'd-Dīn Muhammad conquered Shīrāz and introduced prohibition: "if they have closed the taverns for the King's sake, they will open them for God's sake," says he, to which the Crown Prince, Shujā' added: "today the drunken person in Shīrāz is the Proctor: he also is drunk, though not with wine."[1] This Shujā' put his father to death in 1357; overcame his brother Mahmūd in a civil war: "We have divided the earth equally amongst ourselves: I have taken the face of the earth and he (Mahmūd) has taken its core;"[2] and had the taverns reopened : " 'tis the time of Shāh Shujā',' says Hāfiz "drink wine boldly."[3] Amongst the poet's other patrons were the Jalā'ir ruler, Sultān Uways d. 776/1374; Shāh Mansūr, the last of the Muzaffarids, and the rulers of Bengal and the Deccan. The projected voyage to India ended at the port of Hurmuz: "a hundred pearls are not worth the perils of the stormy sea," says the poet. When Tīmūr (Tamer lane) entered Shīrāz in 1387, he censured Hāfiz for speaking disparagingly of his twin capitals in the following verse: "if my sweetheart responds to my love, I'd give Samarqand

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1 رندان همه ترک می پرستي کردند
جز محتسب شهر که بي می مست است

2 کردیم دو بخش تا بیا ساید خلق
او زیر زمین گرفت و من روی زمین

دور شاه شجاع است می دلیر بنوش

and Bhukhārā for the black mole on her fair face." "*I only said,* 'three maunds of sugar and two dates (sih man qand-o do khurmā rā)' " *was the apology offered by Ḥāfiẓ. All the verses of Ḥāfiẓ, therefore, are not mystical: some are historical and worldly; some, gay and satirical; and others are not even the compositions of Ḥāfiẓ and have been rightly expunged from the critical edition of the* Dīwān-i-Ḥāfiẓ *prepared by Dr. Ghanī and that great Orientalist, Mīrzā Muḥammad Khān Qazwīnī.*

XXXIX 1

ALTHOUGH wine exalts the spirit and the breeze is laden with the scent of flowers, drink not to the notes of the harp for the Proctor is alert.

If thou hast a pitcher of wine and a sweetheart, drink carefully for the times are mischievous.

Hide the wine-cup in thy ragged sleeve for as a pitcher pours forth red wine so does this age shed blood.

We shall wash with our tears the wine-stains on our cloak for 'tis a period of abstinence and prohibition.

XXXIX 2

MY heart is the canopy which shelters His love; my eye is the mirror which reflects His countenance.

Though for the two worlds I never lowered my head, now under the weight of His favour, my neck bows and bends.

For thee, the tree of Paradise; for me, the tall stature of my friend: the objective of every person depends upon the height of his aspiration.

Wonder not if my garment be stained with sin, but behold how the whole world is a proof of His chastity.

I am he who lives in that noble shrine whose chamberlain is the pure morning breeze.

May my eye never be deprived of His vision for ts pupil is the place of His retreat.

Each new flower which became the glory of the garden is a visible proof of the colour and fragrance of His company.

Majnūn had his day and now 'tis my turn: everyone hath his one crowded hour of glorious life.

The kingdom of love and the treasury of joy—whatever be mine comes from His blessed spirit of chivalry.

If I and my heart perish 'tis no matter: the main thing is to be sure of His safety.

Behold not the outward poverty of Ḥāfiẓ for his heart is rich with love for his Beloved.

XXXIX 3

To spend a moment in sorrow is not worth the whole world: sell our patched garment for a cup of wine; a fairer price than this it cannot fetch.

In the street of wine-sellers, they will not buy it for cup of wine: oh, for our prayer-carpet of purity which is not worth even a cup of wine!

My rival hath chided me saying, "turn thy face away from this door:" what hath happened to my head which is not worth even the dust of a door?

That royal crown wherein lies the risk of losing one's life is an attractive cap, grand and glorious—but not worth the sacrifice of the head.

How trivial appeared at first the danger of the sea-voyage in the hope of gain; but I erred greatly: not worth a hundred pearls is (a wave of) the stormy sea.

'Tis best for thee not to look at thy admirers, for the joy of conquering the world is not worth the worry of looking after an army.

Like Ḥāfiẓ, be contented; and take no notice of this vile world, for a single grain of the favour of mean people is not worth a hundred maunds of gold.

XXXIX 4

WELCOME is the advent of spring and nothing could be more appropriate now than a cup of wine in thy hand.

Make the most, aye, make the most of these happy days for the pearl remains not always in the shell.

Now is thy chance to drink wine in the garden, for the flowers will not remain in bloom for more than a week.

O thou who hast filled thy golden bowl with ruby wine pass it on to him who hath no gold at all.

Come to our tavern, O Shaykh, and drink that wine which is not found even in the stream of Paradise.

Wash out all these pages if thou dost belong to our school of thought for love is not a science to be found in books.

Listen to me and give thy heart to a sweetheart whose beauty depends not on her jewellery.

Oh, give me that wine which brings no drowsiness—in whose wake follows no headache.

I am whole heartedly the servant of Sulṭān Uways though he remembers not this servant of his.

I swear by that world-adorning crown of his which is a better ornament for the head than the sun can be

That only he finds fault with the verses of Ḥāfiẓ who gets no pleasure out of pearls at all.

XXXIX 5

NOT every person whose face can blush is a second Majnūn; not every person who can make a mirror is a second Alexander.[1]

Not every person who wears a tilted cap and sits bolt upright is a prince or a man of culture.

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[1] Alexander put up a tower in Alexandria and in the mirror therein were reflected all the events of the world.

Dont render service like beggars for the sake of wages, for the benefactor himself knows how to patronize.

I am the slave of that adventurer, that reckless libertine who can make his poverty function like alchemy.

Fidelity and fulfilment of promise are the virtues which would do thee good to learn, for everyone knows how to play the tyrant.

I toyed with my insane heart not knowing that a daughter of Eve can possess all the arts of a fairy.

A thousand points, finer than the finest hairs are present here: not every person who knows how to shave his head is a hermit.

The pupils of my eyes have derived their lustre form thy dark mole, for only a jeweller knows the value of a (black) pearl of matchless beauty.

Whoso became the queen of beauty because of her face and stature would be heading straight for world-conquest if she but knew the practice of justice.

Only he can appreciate the attractive lyrics of Ḥāfiẓ who has a poetical disposition and knows the nuances of the Iranian speech.

XXXIX 6

Good news has come that the days of sorrow will end: what was, has gone; what is, shall not also remain.

If I have fallen in the estimate of my friend neither does my rival, respected and honoured remain.

When the chamberlain kills every comer with the sword of her glances, how can, in the inner shrine, a devotee remain?

When all record is to be expunged from the scroll of life how can the question of giving thanks for the good and of complaining against bad entries remain?

The refrain of Jamshīd's court, they say, was this: pass the cup of wine, for Jamshīd and his court will not always remain.

Make the most of the moth's desire for thee, O candle, for even till dawn this tete-a-tete can hardly remain.

O man of means win the poor man's heart, for thy hoarded gold and vaults of silver cannot always remain.

On this emerald portico (of the sky) has been inscribed in letters of gold that nothing but the bounty of the bountiful shall ever remain.

Dont lose hope of kindness from the Beloved, O Ḥāfiẓ, for the marks of cruelty and the signs of oppression cannot always remain.

XXXIX [7]

WILL the doors of the tavern reopen and the knots of our tangled affairs be unravelled?

If they have closed the taverns for the sake of a pious and conceited king, dont lose heart they will open them for the sake of the Almighty God.

The prayer from the pure hearts of drunken revellers is a key wherewith many a locked door shall be opened.

Write a letter of condolence on the death of the daughter of the Grape so that all the page-boys of the Magian tavern may untie their locks of hair (with grief).

Cut the strings of the harp in mourning for the death of pure wine so that all the revellers may shed tears of blood from their eyes.

They have closed the door of the taverns; O God, let it not be that they may open the doors of the house of hypocrisy.

From inside this cloak of thine O Ḥāfiẓ, tomorrow thou'lt see how many Zoroastrian girdles they will treacherously produce against thee.

XXXIX 8

WHOSO inhaled thy fragrant smell from the morning breeze received as it were a familiar message from a familiar friend.

O queen of beauty cast a glance at this beggar, for his ear hath heard many a tale of kings and beggars.

I am making my palate of life pleasant with musky wine for the hypocrisy of the cloak-wearing inmates of the monastery has left a bitter taste in the mouth.

The mystery of God which the Gnostic never confided to any one it surprises me how and whence the wine-seller came to know.

O God where is the confidant to whom I may explain for a while what my heart did say and what it heard.

O my faithful heart 'twas not proper that improper words should have been used against thee by thy own sympathizer.

If I have been deprived of visiting her street, 'tis no matter, for who did ever inhale the scent of fidelity from this garden of the world.

Come, O cup-bearer for Love is proclaiming in a loud voice, "he who has told Our tale had heard it from no one else but Ourselves."

'Tis not only today that we are drinking wine 'neath our hermit's cloak: a hundred times hath the keeper of the tavern heard that such was our way of life.

The advice of a philosopher is naught but profit and welfare: fortunate is he who hears it to act upon it.

O Ḥāfiẓ thy duty is only to give good advice; how far it is heard or unheard strive not to know.

XXXIX 9

I am not that libertine who forsakes his mistress or forgoes his cup of wine: the Proctor knows that such acts are hardly in my line.

Having repeatedly been a bitter critic of the repentant, I'd now be mad were I to repent myself of drinking wine in the season of spring.

Love is a pearl; I am a diver; and the tavern is the sea: therein have I plunged head downwards, how then can I raise my head aloft?

I am a law-breaker seduced by the cup of the tulip and the intoxicated eye of the narcissus: I have many charges to face, O Lord, whom should I charge with arbitration?

Draw back thy rein for a while, O beautiful disturber of the city's peace and let me pave thy way with the pearls of my tears and the gold of my sallow face.

With the cornelians and rubies of my (blood-laden) tears I own many treasures myself; shall I then look for favours from the high-starred sun?

When the morning breeze doth wash all the bunches of flowers with the dew of kindness, call me a pessimist were I to look at the (black) page of my Book of Life.

Not much reliance can be placed on the pledges and promises of the sphere: I shall strike a bargain with the wine-cup and lay a bet with the bowl.

[When I am getting paradise in cash today why should I trust the hermit's words and his paradise of tomorrow ?]

When in this poverty of mine I have in my hands a royal treasure, shall I cast a covetous glance on the turns of the wheeling sky whose patronage is reserved for the ignoble?

Though soaked and besmirched with poverty I'd be ashamed of my adventurous spirit were I to turn for help from the dry-cleansing disc of the sun.

If it pleases the Beloved to see her lovers burn in fire, I'll not commit the offence of casting a longing eye on the limpid waters of paradise.

Last night her ruby lips sent many an alluring signal to the heart of Ḥāfiẓ but he is far too shrewd to be beguiled by her spells.

XXXIX 10

FROM my friend comes my pain and its cure as well; to him have I sacrificed my heart and the soul as well.

The critics who say that in beauty "*that quality*" is superior to "*this*" do not know that my friend has this quality and that as well.

May that maiden be remembered who to spill my blood broke her promise and the pledge as well.

Friends, what I am saying now in secret, will have to be said later on, in public as well.

In the train of good luck have come the (bright) nights of union; and the (dark) days of separation have ended as well.

The two worlds are but one blaze of His lustrous face: this is my exoteric comment to thee, and the esoteric as well.

Rely not on the freaks of this world—or rather, on the turns of the wheeling sky as well.

Bring wine; a lover fears not the Papal Bull—or rather, the decrees of the Royal Court as well.

The Proctor knows that *Ḥāfiẓ* is a lover—a fact known to the Āṣaf of the kingdom of Solomon[1], as well.

XXXIX 11

THE entrance to the tavern's door had been swept and watered; and the keeper had taken his seat and was welcoming his customers, young and old.

The revellers had girdled their belts in his service; and with the sash of their turbans had planted the royal umbrella on the clouds.

The lustre of the cup and decanter had eclipsed the beauty of the moon; the cheeks of the pages of the tavern had stolen the colour of the radiant sun.

[1] *i.e.*, Prime-minister of the kingdom of Shīrāz. Āṣaf was Solomon's grand vazīr.

In her bridal chamber, the bride of good fortune had clipped her tresses with a thousand airs and graces; and had sprinkled rose-water on the rosy petals of her cheeks.

A ministering angel was holding the bowl of delight; and with a draught on the flushed cheeks of fairies and nymphs was sprinkling the water of roses.

With the noise and brawl of mistresses sweet at their task, sugar was losing its value, the lily was shedding its petals, and the rebec was striking its notes.

I saluted him and he smiled and said: "O lover of wine, steeped in poverty, soaked in drink,

Who can show, as thou hast shown, such a spirit of enterprise, in spite of his age—to turn his back on wealth and pitch his tent in a tavern?

I am afraid they will not grant thee union with awakened good fortune, for when fortune was smiling in thy face thou wert lying, drowned in slumber."

Come to the tavern, O *Ḥāfiẕ* that I may acquaint thee with a thousand prayers which never remain unanswered.

The sky is the leader of the sumpter horse of Shāh Nuṣratu'd-Dīn (Yaḥyā);[1] come and see his guiding angel holding the stirrup.

To become his horseshoe, the moon has turned crescent; behold it bending down from the sky and imprinting a hundred kisses on the ground before his feet.

XXXIX 12

Last night I went to the tavern in a drowsy condition; wet with wine was my hermit's cloak and my carpet of prayer as well.

I felt sorry when that Magian page behind the bar said to me, "Be awake, O drowsy traveller,

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[1] This Muzaffarī prince, brother of Shāh Manṣūr, ruled at Yazd and was put to death by Tīmūr in 795/1393.

Wash thyself well; then come to the tavern so that this bar may not be polluted by thee.

How long by covetting the sweet lips of earthly beauties wilt thou stain the virgin whiteness of thy soul with melted rubies?

Pass in purity the evening of thy life and mar not the flowing robes of age by flaunting the tight gaiters of youth.

Be pure and clean, and emerge from the pit of selfness, for the cleansing property belongs not to water which is muddy .'

"O soul of the world," said I, " 'tis no harm if in the season of spring, the floral book (of life) gets stained with clear wine;

For, in this deep sea, those who know the path of love, dived in such fashion that no (slimy) water ever stained their person."

"O *Hāfiz*," said he, "do not try to score off thy freinds with thy subtle and charming conceits". Oh, for his kind reply' mixed with all manner of anger.[1]

XXXIX [13]

O uninformed person try to become well-informed: unless thou hast become a traveller how canst thou be the guide of travellers?

In the school of divine realities sit at the feet of the Master of Philosophical Love: then shall the pupil of today become the teacher of tomorrow.

Like a manly traveller wash thy hands off the copper of existence so that thou mayest acquire the alchemy of love and transmute thyself to gold.

Sleep and food have expelled thee from thy status of a man: then shalt thou revert to thy original self when thou hast renounced both food and sleep.

---

1 Anger is a composite term for disagreement, contentiousness, conceit, pride, arrogance, temper, ridicule, malice, avarice and perfidy.

Should the light of Divine Love illumine thy heart and soul, by God brighter than the sun shalt thou be.

Plunge thyself for a moment in the ocean of Divine Love and have no fear, for not a thread of thy hair can be moistened even by the waters of the seven seas.

From head to foot thou'lt be a blaze of Divine Light if in the way of the Lord of Glory thou renouncest both head and feet.

Should the Beatific Vision be thy objective, thou'lt become a Seer no doubt, endowed with the inner eye.

Since the basis of thy existence must become topsy turvy let not the idea of being at the top or bottom ever enter thy mind.

If the desire of Union with God is in thy heart, O Ḥāfiẓ, be the dust at the door of mystics, first of all.

XXXIX 14 (*a—z*)

Selected Verses

[On Piety and Purity]

(*a*) IF the Creator had made my faults and sins non-punishable, how could He have exercised His Mercy and Forgiveness?

(*b*) I am not the only exile from the house of piety: my ancestor also let the eternal paradise slip from his hands.

(*c*) WHEN there is no purity, the Ka'bah and the idol-temple are alike: no virtue exists in that home where chastity is wanting.

(*d*) O my heart, learn from the Proctor the art of drinking: he is gloriously drunk but who can suspect him of drinking?

(*e*) THE preachers who assume such airs on the pulpit and the rostrum, appear in rather a different role in the bosom of their home.

(*f*) SPEAK not here of honour and dishonour for we consider ourselves disgraced by honour and honoured by dishonour.

(*g*) LET me teach thee the alchemy of prosperity: 'tis avoidance of evil company; avoidance of evil company.

[On High Ideas]

(*h*) HOW long shall a phoenix of high rank like thee be a lover of bones?[1] Alas, that the shadow which confers royalty should fall on the worthless.

(*i*) EVEN if the dark granite were to part with its life 'twould not become a ruby: what can it do when its origin is base.

(*j*) THEY say, "if a stone ramains patiently in one spot, it turns into a ruby." Aye, so it does; but it pays for it with its heart's blood.

(*k*) THE comfort of the two worlds is a commentary of these two words: kindness to friends; consideration for foes.

(*l*) LEAD thy life in such fashion that when thou diest they may not say of thee, thou art dead.

[On Love, the Lover and Beloved]

(*m*) PERISHABLE is every edifice that you see save the edifice of Love which is imperishable.

(*n*) WHEN the fire of my heart can be *felt* in my burning words, does it behove me to *name* my condition.

(*o*) SAID Madman to Laylā once, "O incomparable sweetheart, a lover thou'lt get but he will not be a *mad man* (*Madman*).

(*p*) COME and hear from me the condition of Lovers—in few words, of wide significance.

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[1] The legendary phoenix lives on bones; and its shadow confers royalty upon persons. "If its shadow fell upon me, I'd be a king; and if it fell upon you, you'd be a queen; and I dare not say what would happen if its shadow fell upon both of us simultaneously"—so said I to a mademoiselle when I was one and twenty.

(*q*) O thou who didst advise me to part with my heart that it may be at rest, lo! I have parted with my heart but it is restless still.

(*r*) THOU didst say, "dont you want to kiss my ruby lips?" "Aye, this very desire is killing me, but what power have I and what can I do?"

(*s*) THAT bitter wine which kills the mystic cannot destroy the basis of my life. O cupbearer, place thy lips upon mine; and extract my sweet soul from my body.

(*t*) He who gives his life for a draught of wine, oh, give him a draught and take his life.

(*u*) LOVE-MAKING needs patience: persevere, O my heart; if there was pain, let it be; if there was a fault, let it go.

(*v*) LIKE thee, not a body exists. A body ? No, by God, not even a soul.

(*w*) As the price of a kiss, they want my life: how sweet are these sweethearts! what lasses, alas!

(*x*) WHOSOEVER saw her eyes, said, "where is the Proctor that he may arrest a drunkard?"

(*y*) I am surprised at her image which remains impressed in my eye, though constantly washed with tears.

(*z*) SUCH tears I shed that as they coursed in my eye, everyone paused to ask, "which (new) river is this ?"

KAMĀL OF KHUJAND

Not to be confused with Kamāl of Iṣfahān who specialized in odes, Kamāl of Khujand, died c. 803/1400, is the author of a dīwān *of lyrical poetry. Using an untranslatable pun, he says of a darwīsh with a cut nose:—*

XL

THAT Ṣūfī whose nose has been cut off is showing me excessive humility and helplessness.

Since the poor wretch hath no nose, how can you chide him for not looking beyond his nose? [1]

[1] Literally, you cannot accuse him of vanity (*khud-bīnī*), for he himself (*khud*) has no nose (*bīnī*).

JĀMĪ

Nūru'd-Dīn 'Abdū'r-Raḥmān Jāmī, 817-898/1414—1492, was born at Jām and died in Herāt, a city which because of the Prince, Sulṭān Ḥusayn and his premier, Mīr 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī had become the cultural capital of Asia. Jāmī was a genius and an original thinker: his works include 3 dīwāns *of mystical lyrics and 7 mathnawīs* Haft Awrang, *the most celebrated being* Yūsuf and Zulaykhā, *composed in 888/1483. While Jāmī was reciting this couplet of his own composition, addressed to the Deity:—*

> *"So constantly art Thou in my stricken soul and sleepless eye, that whosoever should appear from afar, I should think it was Thou,"*

an irreverent listener said: "Suppose it were an ass?" "I should think it was thou", *replied Jāmī.*

XLI [1]

(From *Yūsuf wa Zulaykhā*)

[On the Nature of Beauty]

IN that pristine solitude when of existence there was no trace; and the world was concealed in non-existence.

He constituted existence: all by Himself, without semblance of duality, without any talk of Thou and We.

Confined to Himself alone, *He* was the Absolute Being; and His manifestation was only from Himself to Himself.

That beloved, that ornament of the heart, was then in the bridal chamber of the invisible world.

His face unreflected by mirror; His hair not parted by comb;

His tresses unwafted by breeze; His eyes not darkened with collyrium;

On the roses of His cheeks, no hyacinths of tresses; on the flower of His face, no verdure of the down.

No mole or painted spot on His clear face; unseen; uncontemplated—

In such wise did He dwell, playing to Himself the tunes of love—playing by Himself (for Himself) the game of love.

But since it is in the nature of beauty to disclose herself and no remain morose behind a veil—

For Beauty tolerates no concealment and if confined, will peep through the window of the cell;

And just as the anemone growing on the hillside, radiant with joy at the advent of spring

Bursts through the crevice of the flower-crushing rock and displays its beauty;

Or just as thy mind when it conceives a rare and original idea

Knows no rest until it has expressed it in words spoken or written—

Even so does beauty desire to reveal itself and be admired; and the first to feel this inner urge was the Eternal Beauty (God Himself).

Wherefore He descended to the world of phenomena and manifested Himself in all objects, animate and inanimate.[1]

Every object became a mirror to reflect one or more of His attributes; and every place became the forum of His talk.

A flash of His (Light) fell upon each kingdom and king; and the king found himself wandering like the revolving sphere.

All admirers, all seekers of His divine attributes became unconscious and started saying, "Glory be to God."

To the divers of this celestial sea, He is the ship; and "Glory be to the Lord of the Kingdom" is the ecstatic cry everywhere.

With a flash of His Light the earth was irradiated; and the heart of the nightingale[2] began to clamour for the Rose.[3]

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1 "I was a hidden treasure and desired to be known so I created the creation in order that I might be known."

2 *i.e.*, creatures, the lovers.

3 *i.e.*, God, the Beloved.

The candle illumined itself with His fire and in every home burnt a hundred moths.

A ray of his Light lit the sun; the lotus also emerged from the tank.

Laylā decorated her face with the lustre of His countenance; and Majnūn's longing for each thread of Laylā's heart originated from Him.

He showed Himself as the Moon of Canaan (Joseph); and ruined the heart of Zulaykhā.

His beauty manifested itself everywhere; and made itself evident in every charming creature of the world.

Behind every veil, the veiled beauty is *He*: Fate makes the heart restless; and He enslaves it.

With His love, the heart hath life; with His love, the soul hath delight.

Every heart in love with the fair ones of the earth, is in love with Him—whether it knows or does not know.

Beware! Permit thyself no slip of the tongue; nor say: "from us is love; from Him is beauty."

For like beauty, pure love comes from Him and shows itself in thee.

Thou art the mirror; and the holder of the mirror is He; nay, thou art hidden and He is manifest.

For if thou lookest deep into the matter, He is the mirror also: not only is He the treasure but the treasury as well.

Thou and I do not come into the picture at all: "we are but phantasies, vain an unreal."[1]

Be silent, for this tale hath no end: it hath no tongue (to speak) nor can it be spoken by tongue.

To love Him and to tell the tale of His love should be our aim—for without this, we are nothing; we are nothing!

---

1 Prof. E. G. Browne's translation.

XLI 2

[From the dīwān]

WITH those lips of thine, thou hast given defeat to the parrot of the silvery tongue; (with thy beauty), thou hast snatched away the reins of self-control from the ladies of silvery bosom.[1]

We have got used to receiving the favour of thy attention; don't pass by us now ignoring and pretending.

Should thou break open the casket of my heart on the stone of tyranny, thou'lt recover nothing from it save the gem of my supplication.

Afflicted by thy love, I am going away with parched lips inspite of those streams to be seen flowing from my blood-shot eyes!

O my heart, dost thou want to pitch the tent of aspiration? Borrow then the ropes of her hair and the pillar of her stature!

In the kingdom of love, great is the difference between what is good and what is base: to the good, turn the good; to the base, the base.

Jāmī raised aloft the banner of madness in the world when love lowered the flag of the wise.

XLI 3

BE a mirror and see the reflection of His face in the mirror; dont listen to what is said, for hearing is not like seeing.

"Can thy beauty be seen?" I asked; and the coy reply came to me, "if thou makest thy heart clear like a mirror, then certainly."

[1] In this lyric are terminal assonances, *bar ān, burun; kunān, kunun; 'ayān, 'ayun; sitān, sutun: badān, ba dun; farzānegān, negun,* which I have not been able to reproduce.

The atoms of Being are the mirrors of His beauty; and in each mirror is reflected a different aspect of His face.

O mystic, thou art the wearer of a patched robe and we are wine-drinking libertines: we are the same but for the physical distance separating us from thee.

When *Jāmī* fell in the surging sea of Eternity, he was cleansed from the tumultous passions of created beings.

XLI 4

So constantly art Thou in my afflicted soul and sleepless eye that whosoever should appear from afar I should think it was Thou !

He who gives his life but does not submit, am I; he who spills my blood but does not show himself to me art Thou !

If my life is lost, why fear, 'tis enough that Thou art my beloved; and if I have lost my heart, what matter, 'tis enough that my sweetheart art Thou !

Though every moment grief continues to oppress me in a hundred ways, I am not worried, my darling, since my redresser art Thou !

The day comes begging for light from my dark nights because with thy moon-bright face, the candle of my dark nights art Thou.

Alas ! To whom should I confide my grief in these dark nights of sorrow: he who knows how little is my patience and great is my grief art Thou!

Though in the market-place of Union Thou'lt not buy me for a penny, behold my vaunting when I say, my buyer art Thou !

Thou didst say, "O *Jāmī*, I am thy friend; seek not another." Oh, I'll have to remain long with a friend, if (as Thou sayest) my friend art Thou !

XLI 5

How long this nuisance of society which chains thee to worries! Turn thy face from every one to God—then shalt thou be calm and peaceful.

Day and night, before thy eyes are the restless waves of the sea of eternity: alas if thy spiritual part becomes marred and corrupt by yielding to the temporal!

Abandon sleep, for in the assembly of the alert and vivacious, unless thy eyes are sleepless, thou hast no chance of being considered as a possessor of eyes.

Thou art false copper: why art thou negligent? Seek alchemy (and transmute thyself). Plating thyself with gold is self-deception; what will it avail thee?

O master, be not strict, for in this dark hollow of the world, thou'lt be pulverized underfoot in the twinkling of an eye!

Try to reduce thy temporal substance, for like the moon thou'lt no doubt increase when thou hast decreased.

Jāmī, 'tis not for thee to inhale the spiritual breeze of poverty, so long as "*to be*" makes thee glad, "*not to be*" makes thee sad.

XLI 6

[From the *Lawā'iḥ*]

Dost thou wish to understand how the Divine Existence manifests itself in all things?

Go and see the bubble on the surface of wine; how the wine is it in it, and it is wine in wine.

MUHTASHAM

The national Ṣafawī empire which lasted from Sh̲āh Ismā'īl's coronation to Nādir's election as Sh̲āh[1] *907-1148/1501-1736, favoured theology more than poetry; and poets born in India preferred in consequence to migrate to India and seek the patronage of the Great Mog̲h̲uls. Of the poets who continued to remain in Īrān the two most important are Muḥtas̲h̲am and Hātifī.*

Muḥtas̲h̲am of Kās̲h̲ān died in 996/1588. His elegy called the Haft Band *records in 12 strophes the tragedy of Karbalā and commemorates the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī and 71 followers on the tenth of Muḥarram/Oct.10, 680 A.D. Ignoring the warning of the poet Farazdaq that "the hearts of the people of Kufah (in 'Irāq) are with you but their swords are against you, the Imām arrived in Karbalā to find a strong Umayyid army arrayed against him. Refusing to accept Yazīd*[2] *as the Caliph, "what sort of Muslims are you?" asked the Imām, "for if a descendant o the Ass of Jesus had survived, the Christians would have venerated it; but you are prepared to shed the blood of the grandson of your own Prophet."*

XLII

I fear that when they record the punishment to be meted out to his murderers, all recommendations for mercy will be struck off by the Pen straightaway.

---

1 The chronogram of Nādir's election is "*it is alright what has happened*" (الخير فى ما وقع) A wit reversed the first two letters and the chronogram became "*it is all wrong what has happened:*" (لا خير فى ماوقع) Another composed the verse:

"We abandoned hope of life and property in the year: *it is alright what has happened.*" Nādir was so enraged that he put many poets to the sword.

2 The second Umayyid Caliph.

I fear that on Judgment Day all intercessors for the sins of mankind will feel ashamed to speak of the sins of mankind because of this heinous sin.

The wrath of God will be roused and His hand will protude from the sleeve when the people of the House of 'Alī[1] lay their hands on the people of tyranny.

Alas for the time when with blood-dripping shrouds, the House of 'Alī will raise aloft from the desert a banner like unto a flame of fire.

Alas for the time when the youth of the House of 'Alī will rise in their rose-red shrouds and appear in a compact body on the plain of Resurrection.

Aye, this body of martyrs whose ranks were broken by the tragedy of Karbalā will break through all ranks in a serried file and upset the order of the Judgment Day.

What can they hope from the Keeper of the Sanctuary those wretches who made game of the inmates of the Sanctuary

And bore on spear-point a head whose tresses used to be washed by Gabriel with the waters of Paradise.

---

1 The Prophet's cousin, son-in-law and the 4th Orthodox Caliph.

HĀTIF

Here are the First, part of the Second, and the Fourth strophes of a beautiful Tarjī' Band *in 5 strophes by which the name of Sayyid Aḥmad Hātif, a Persian poet of the 18th century, has been immortalized.*

XLIII

[1]

O Thou to whom I sacrifice my heart and soul, and on whose path I place both this and that as an offering.

My heart is a sacrifice to Thee for Thou art the sweetheart; my soul is an offering to Thee for Thou art the Beloved.

To release my heart from Thee is difficult; to lay down my soul at thy feet is easy.

The way of Union with Thee is a way full of danger: the pain of my love for Thee is a pain which is cureless.

We are slaves of Thine: heart and soul at Thy beck and call; eye and ear on the alert to receive Thy command.

Is peace Thy desire? Here is the heart. Is strife Thy desire? Here is the soul.

Last night, in one of Love's ecstatic fits, I was wandering aimlessly everywhere.

Till an impulse for sight-seeing took me to the Temple of the Magians.

Avaunt malicious glances ! I saw a retreat shining with celestial not earthly light.

On all sides was a fire—that selfsame nocturnal fire which Moses the son of Amrān, saw on Mt. Sinaī.

The High Priest was tending the fire; and round him, in respectful attendance were the Magian boys

Whose cheeks were like silver or the petals of the white rose narrow was their mouth and passing sweet their speech.

The music of the lute, harp, reed, cymbal and barbiton was there; nor were the candle, dessert, roses, wine and the fragrant basil wanting.

The cup-bearer with her face like the moon and her musky hair; the minstrel with his repartees and pleasing voice.

And the entire hierarchy of the Magians, young and old, high and low with girt-up loins—

'Twas a sight which made me feel ashamed of my Islamism and I concealed myself in a corner.

"This visitor, who is he?" asked the High Priest. "A lover," they replied, "restless and wandering."

"Give him a cup of pure wine," said he, "though he be a guest uninvited."

Thereupon that fire-worshipping cup-bearer poured out for me with her dexterous hands a bowl of liquid fire

Which I drained—and lo! neither reason remained nor consciousness. Purged of faith and idolatry

I reeled and fell; and in that drunken condition, in indescribable language,

I heard every limb of mine—aye, even my arteries and the jugular vein—proclaim:

He only is and He is One; the single God; no God but He.

[2]

In the church I said to my Christian sweetheart, "O thou who hast ensnared my heart

How long wilt thou stray from the path of monotheism? How long wilt Thou allow Trinity to mar the concept of Unity?

Is it befitting that the One God be described as the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost?
Smiling sweetly she poured forth a shower of confetti from her sweet lips, saying
"Hadst thou really known the secret of the Divine Unity thou wouldst not have charged me with paganism
For the lustre of the face of the Eternal Beloved has been reflected in a three fold mirror
And silk is still One silk not three if it is called *ḥarīr*, or *paran* or *parniyān*."
We were exchanging our views in such fashion when the Church bell began to peal:
He only is, and He is One: the Single God; no God but He.

[3]

OPEN the inner eye that thou mayest see the soul: what is not to be seen that thou'lt see.
If thou turnest thy face towards the kingdom of love, the whole universe laid out as one garden thou'lt see.
And how in compliance with the wishes of the people of that world, the wheeling sky doth turn, thou'lt see.
What thou seest, thy heart shall desire; what thy heart desires, that thou'lt see.
There, the veriest beggars without head and feet, heavy-headed with a sense of duty thou'lt see.
There, a bare-footed community treading on the highest stars of the firmament thou'lt see.
There, at the time of the mystical dance, an ecstatic troupe, snapping its fingers at the two worlds thou'lt see.
Give to love whatever thou hast; and no loss shalt thou suffer—not a jot or tittle, thou'lt see.
If thou meltest thy heart in the crucible of love, how love transmutes thy heart like an alchemy, thou'lt see.

Beyond the six confines of the cube of the world thou'lt pass and the infinite expanse of the Spaceless thoul't see.

That which the ear hath not heard, thou'lt hear; that which the eye hath not seen, thou'lt see.

Oh, love the One with thy heart and soul—then with the eye of certainty thou'lt see.

He only is, and He is One: the Single God; no God but He.

MUGHAL POETRY

The value of Mughal poetry lies both in its beauty of form and ideas : some of its features like originality of concept, repartees, satires, wit and humour may not be difficult to reproduce; but how are puns, chronograms, assonances and peculiarities of the Arabic script to be preserved in a translation?

BĀBUR

Since that illustrious king was born on the sixth of Muḥarram, *the chronogram of his birth is* the sixth of Muḥarram[1]=888 A.H. *Another fine chronogram which gives the date of his victory at Panipat in 932/1526 is the second half of this verse*

The time and day and month and year of the victory
Was morning and Friday and the seventh Rajab.[2]

Bābur's Persian verses are very few but of good quality.

XLIV $_1$ [3]

O moon (-bright lady) the night of union with thee is a day of happiness but the day of separation from thee is a night of torture for me.

O my darling, lacerate my heart: thy injury will be a soothing balm. To this weary life of mine, all pain from thee is a pleasure.

---

1 چون در شش محرم زاد آن شه مکرم
تاریخ مولدش هم آمد شش محرم [888]

2 وقت و روز و ماه و سال این ظفر
صبح بود و جمعه و هفت رجب [932]

3 Discovered by Prof. Mu'īnu'd-Dīn.

That mole on thy tulip-like cheek is the scar of love, for thy lovers: let it be !

Take thy fill of life and drain the wine-cup for this is precisely the time for drinking and enjoying.

Hath thy sweetheart shed thy blood? Then be silent and rejoice O *Bābur* for even such an act of hers is a favour.

XLIV $_2$

NEW Year and spring and wine and a sweetheart are good: *Bābur* have a good time for the world is not to be had a second time.

XLIV $_3$

SPRING has come but the lover who has no beloved takes no interest in the vernal air or the garden of tulips.

I have seen much mischief upon the planet but not like the mischief in those eyes of thine.

XLIV $_4$

[On Mawlānā Riddle: Shihāb-i-Mu'ammā'ī].

THY name has spread from Persia to Arabia and thy letter brings joy to the heart in pain.

Always does the *riddle* lead to a name but curiously thy name leads to a *Riddle*.

XLIV $_5$

[On the Mīr of Bayānah]

STRIVE not with the Turk, O Mīr of *Bayānah*: his courage and skill are obvious.

If thou comest not soon nor dost give ear to counsel what need to explain (*bayān*) what is patent?

HUMĀYŪN

Humāyūn's chequered life (1530-1556 A.D.) *is reflected in his* Dīwān *recently published by me.*[1]

XLV 1

To Bahādur Shāh of Gujarat who was besieging Humāyun's ally, the Rānā of Chitor in 941/1534.]

O thou who art the enemy of *Chitor*, how (*chaṭawr*) shalt thou seize non-Muslims?

A king has come down upon thee: shalt thou seize *Chitor* sitting complacently?

XLV 2

[To his intriguing brother, Kāmrān]

[I thought you were *a part* of me, like the image in a mirror, yet you remain *apart* from me]

ALTHOUGH one's image can be seen in a mirror, it always remains apart from one's self.

It is strange to see one's self as some one else: this marvel is the work of God.

XLV 3

[To his father-in-law Bābā Dūst]

HE whose kernel is worth more than his shell is our old friend Bābā Dūst.

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1 *Researche* in *Persian Literature*, pp. 110-175.

XLV 4

[To Shāh Ṭahmāsp of Īrān, asking for asylum]

O king, the phoenix of my adventurous soul hath since a long time made the summit of the Caucasus of contentment, its abode.

My enemy is Shīr (lion or Shīr Shāh) who many a time showed his back but has now turned his face towards me.

I crave this favour of the king that he may do unto me what 'Alī did unto Salmān in the desert of Arzhan.[1]

XLV 5

[To Shāh Ṭahmāsp from Humāyūn, now an ex-king]

ALL kings seek the shadow of the phoenix (*humā*) but here is *Humā* (Humāyūn) seeking the shadow of a king.[2]

[The Shāh's reply quoting from Ḥāfiẓ.][3]

His Majesty, the Phoenix, will fall into our snare
Should Humāyūn arrive with his stately air!

---

[1] How can the extraordinary beauty of these verses be explained? The Phoenix ('anqā) which lives on Qāf (Mt. Caucasus) is also known as *humā*—and humā is the basis of the name *Humā*yūn; further, since *Qāf* is also the letter *qāf* of the Arabic alphabet, therefore like the humā which lives on Qāf, the ex-king Humāyūn lives in the *qāf* of qanā'at (lives in the c of content-ment); finally, since *shīr* (lion) was the name of Shīr Shāh (who had deprived Humāyūn of his throne), even as 'Alī saved Salmān the Persian from the lion in the desert of Arzhan so will Humāyūn be saved from his leonine adversary Shīr Shāh by King Ṭahmāsp of Īrān.

[2] The shadow of the mythical phoenix (humā) is supposed to confer royalty. A charming English girl was disappointed that India did not possess the Bird of Paradise. "But we have *humā*," said I, "whose shadow confers royalty upon people!" "How thrilling!" "Isnt it extraordinary? For if its shadow fell upon me, I'd be a king; and if it fell upon you, you'd be a queen; and I dare'nt say what would happen if its shadow fell upon both of us simultaneously!"

[3] همای اوج سعادت بدام ما افتد
اگر تراگذری برمقام ما افتد

XLV 6

[In praise of God]

O Thou whose essence is everlasting, like unto Thee there is none : universal is Thy command; pre-existence is Thy realm.

Even if the sea were ink[1], and the skies, the ink-pot, the pen would despair of describing Thy attributes.

XLV 7

[In praise of the Prophet]

O prince of the world in essential existence, verily thou art the friend of the living worshipped God.

Arise and display thy world-illuminating beauty for thou art the purport of the world's creation.

XLV 8

[Also in praise of the Prophet]

THOU art the monarch of the throne of the Prophets; thou art the sun of the sphere of the saints.

Everyone follows thy path; thou showest mankind the way of the Religious Law.

XLV 9

[In praise of his host, S̲h̲āh Ṭahmāsp]

THE streaks of dawn flash forth from thy countenance; the gates of victory have been opened in thy face.

For thee, my prayer to God is this: 'Be ever happy; unrivalled as a monarch, like Noah in age.'

---

[1] From the Holy Qur'ān, ch. XVIII v. 109: لو كان البحر مدادا

XLV 10

[In premonition of his death]

O God, with Thy infinite grace, make me wholly Thine: make me agnostic of Thy Special Substances (Names and Attri butes).

I am sore oppressed at heart by the tyranny of reason: call me Thy madman and release me from earthly bondage.

KĀMRĀN

Kāmrān was Humāyūn's brother and died at Mecca as an exile in 964/1557.

XLVI 1

[To Humāyūn on his coronation]

MAY thy realm perpetually increase; may thy star continue to rise !

May the dust of thy road be the antimony for my eyes—dejected as I am !

May the dust which rises from the road traversed by the beloved (Laylā) settle in the eyes of the lover (Majnūn), its proper place !

May a hundred Dariuses and Farīdūns be thy slaves, like me !

Whosoever doth not encompass thee (with his love), may he be expelled from the vault of heaven !

Kāmrān, so long as the world exists, may Humāyūn be the king of the world.

XLVI 2

[On the false news of Humāyūn's death]

A little breathing time after the death of such an enemy, I deem better far than a hundred years of life.

XLVI 3

[To Islām Shāh who had treated Kāmrān with scant courtesy]

THE movement of the revolving sphere has humbled stiff-necked persons and has imposed uncouth fellows over men of culture.

XLVI$_4$

[To Humāyūn by whose orders Kāmrān was blinded]

WHATEVER thou metest out to me deserves my thanks, be it the blinding needle or the piercing blade.

BAYRAM

Bayram known as Khān Khānān was murdered in 1561. He lives both in the history and poetry of Mughal India.

XLVII 1

[To Humāyūn]

O thou who art essentially the shadow of God and cannot be overpraised

Since thou knowest how in thy absence it fares with me, why dost thou ask me how I fret for thee?

XLVII 2

[This lyric is by Hāshim Qandahārī. Bayram liked it so much that he purchased it for a lakh of tankahs, equal to Rs. 5,000; retained the exordium; emended and rearranged the other couplets; and gave it to the world as his own composition!]

Who am I? One who has allowed the reins of his heart to slip from his hands and without the restraining hand of his heart has fallen off on the road of grief—

Who is wandering like a madman in the skirts of the mountains and without a will of his own is heading off to the desert

Sometimes like a candle burning in the fire of his heart; sometimes like a wick burning in the heart of fire.

Little or much is more or less unknown to me, *Bayram*, who hath never uttered the words 'more or less'.

AKBAR

Akbar ruled 1556-1605. *"If you talk in this fashion," said he to Bīrbal, "what is the difference between you and an illiterate person?" Bīrbal measured with his eyes the distance separating him from the Emperor and said, "Six feet." But Akbar's illiteracy was only theoretical: he was passionately fond of learning; maintained 59 poets at his court; gave Rs. 10,000 to Marwī and Rs. 5,000 to Kāhī for a single ode; and occasionally spoke in impromptu verse of his own composition.*

XLVIII

(*a*) IN Majnūn's neck is not a chain to restrain his madness: love hath put the arm of friendship round his neck.

(*b*) IN the petals of the rose are not dew-drops but tears fallen from the eye of the nightingale.

(*c*) I shed tears of blood and emptied my heart: strange is thy love which makes me happy when I weep.

(*d*) BENT is my back with the weight of sins, what shall I do? Nor to the mosque nor to the temple leads the road, what shall I do?

My place is neither among pagans nor Muslims: unfit I am both for hell and heaven, what shall I do?

(*e*) LAST night in the lane of wine-sellers I bought with gold a bowl of wine

And now my head is heavy with the hangover : I gave gold to buy an aching head.

(*f*) BECAUSE of separation from that *manyār* lass, to grief I (*man*) a friend (*yār*) have become.

(*g*) I dont take "bang", *dont bring it*; I dont play on the harp, *dont bring it*.

or conversely

[for "*may*" means both "*dont*" and "*wine*"; and "*nay*" means both "*dont*" and "lute".]

I dont take "bang", *bring wine*; I dont play on the harp, *bring the lute*.

[On the *bald* Yādgār Riḍwī who had revolted in Kas̲h̲mīr]

(*h*) CAN the cap of sovereignty and the crown of royalty be acquired by a *bald fellow* (kal)? No (kallā), God forbid !

[If Salīm (Jahāngīr) wished to be Emperor he might have killed me and spared Abu'l-Faḍl", said Akbar on hearing of Abu'l-Faḍl's assassination; and then recited the following couplet.]

(*i*) MY S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ was coming *head*long to kiss my *feet*—and now he has come *without head and feet*.

GHAZĀLĪ

Ghazālī came from Meshed to the Deccan : Khān Zamān sent him a thousand rupees together with the following verse and invited him to Jawnpur :

SINCE thou hast not been assessed at thy proper value, take heed or rather *take thy head* and come (for the head of Ghazālī is the letter *gh* ghayn, whose numerical value is one thousand).

After Khan Zamān's fall in 974 H., Ghazālī became Akbar's first poet-laureate and died in 980.

XLIX

(*a*) MY mind is a pearl-laden sea; my tongue is a tempered blade.

The scratch of my pen is the blare of Resurrection[1]: a bird of heaven am I soaring on the wings of eloquence.

(*b*) O *Ghazālī*, I avoid the friend who speaks well of the evil I do.

I prefer the plain blunt fellow who, like a mirror, reveals my faults to me.

(*c*) WILL the wise man ever board a ship or go to sea? Whoso is mad and confounded does this.

No wise man will walk to his own grave or allow himself to be nailed alive in a coffin.

---

[1] The words صور and نفخة are from the *Holy Qur'ān* Ch. xxxvi *v.* 51:

نفخ في الصور

[In honour of the poet Kāhī : Kāhī means *straw*]

(*d*) O *Kāhī*, the world hath no subtle-minded poet like unto thee; no sweet-tongued composer of melodies like unto thee.

Thou hast enticed me by thy verses: there is no *straw* (*kāhī*) like me, no straw-catching (amber) like unto thee.

[A chronogram giving *the date 980* for it was wrongly reported in 980 A.H.: that Kāhī was dead. There is a play on the two *nāc̲h̲ārs* and the date is obtained through *substraction*.)

(*e*) Poor Kāhī left the world. If you require the date of his death

Then since he left *inevitably* (*nāc̲h̲ār*), it is: "*without four* (*nāc̲h̲ār*,) *Qāsim-i-Kāhī left the world.*"

(Qāsim-i-Kāhī left the world is equal to 984; and 984 minus 4 is equal to 980)

On his Horse.

(*f*) That pony is always prostrating itself with humility; and to avoid being outdone in manners by an animal I have also to come down on my knees.

'Tis marvellous how without closing its lips, the horse kisses the earth.

Call it not a horse: it is a stable of grief and sorrow; a dry stick like the horse (knight) on a chessboard.

MARWĪ

Khwājah Ḥusayn-i-Marwī died in Kābul in 984/1576. For an ode of 31 verses whereof all the first hemistichs give 963 A.H., *the date of Akbar's coronation, and all the second hemistichs give 977* A.H., *the date of birth of the Crown Prince Salīm (Jahāngīr), Marwī received from Akbar two hundred thousand copper tankahs equal to Rs. 10,000.*

L [1]

THE welcome birth (of the Prince) has increased the splendour of the king [*963*] for now he has a lustrous pearl (Salīm) to match the royal pearl (Jodh Bāi) [*977*].

The just, the perfect *Muḥammad Akbar*, Lord of Conjunction [*963*]; the illustrious monarch who pursues his desires successfully. [*977*]

O king, I have brought a string of fine pearls [*963*]; as the gift is precious, seek it and hear it. [*977*]

None can bring a better gift than this: whoever has a better gift [*963*] tell him to come; tell him to bring the thing he has. [*977*]

One by one the couplets of *Marwī* are so faultless [*963*] that whichsoever verse thou triest, thou wilt find thy objective twice. [*977*]

The first hemistich thereof gives the date of the king's coronation [*963*]; from the second, obtain the (date of) birth of the darling of the world. [*977*]

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1 The correct text of the complete Ode exists *only* in my *Researches in Persian Literature*, pp. 184-187.

KĀHĪ

Qāsim-i-Kāhī, court-poet of Humāyūn and Akbar, died in 988/1580. His lost dīwān, *chiefly of lyrical verses, has been discovered and published by me.*[1] *Akbar paid him one hundred thousand copper tankahs for the following eight verses wherein the word* "fīl" *or elephant occurs in each verse.*[2]

LI 1

SEEING the fondness of my beloved for elephants, I have spent the cash of my life on the path of the elephant.

Like an elephant I throw dust on my head wherever I go, if I do not see my mahout on my head.

So that my love may wax every moment that mahout drives his raging elephant very close to me.

I want to trumpet like a mad elephant all the time so that I may disclose my hidden secret.

I repeat, 'tis better to hide love: 'tis best to control my tongue like an elephant.

At the feet of the king's elephant (bishop), *Qāsim-i-Kāhī* laid his face (castle): this was his final move on the chess-board of life.

The king who overthrows elephants is Jalālu'd-Dīn Muḥammad Akbar—he who bestows golden elephants on his poets.

May the elephant of the sky be under the goad of his authority so that it may recognize its master, the Lord of Conjunction.

---

[1] Iran Society, Calcutta, 1956.

[2] Rs. 5,000 for 8 verses !

LI 2

[From the *alif-nāmah* in honour of the Caliph 'Alī: the first verse begins with the first letter of the Arabic alphabet, the 2nd with the 2nd, the 3rd with the 3rd etc.][1]

Alif : 'Alī comes first, glorious be his pomp: in his praise speech is dumb.

Dāl : *Call* upon 'Alī (the manifester of wonders); and in the *C* of that *Call*, *see* the *sea* of his generosity.

'Ayn : In the *i* of *'Alī* is the *eye* of God—not *I* but the gnostics say this; and they are wise, not ignorant.

Nūn : 'Alī is a vicegerent and a prophet *in deed*; and *indeed* like him there is none, save the Prophet.

LI 3

[On a Jogi youth whose face, mirror-like, gains lustre from ashes]

WITH ashes thy fiery face wears a veil of blue—or rather, the fire of thy face has burnt thy veil to ashes!

Ashes cleanse the rust of mirrors: why wonder if thy moon-bright face should become brighter with ashes?

Is it the sun of thy face peeping through a film of ashes; or is it the full moon pendent in a sky of azure?

Since the (polish of) ashes hath made thy face a spark of fire, my heart has become, by the fire of thy love, a glowing ember.

'Twere well if *Qāsim-i-Kāhī* were to wear the sacred thread for he has become a Hindu convert by his love for a Sanyāsī idol.

---

1 For the text and translation of the entire *alif-nāmah*, see my *Kāhī: His Life and Times*, pp. 60-63.

(*a*) SINCE prayer goes well with night I pray for thee on the day of separation (because that day, with its gloom, is night).

Kāhī saw thee in his dream last night: O happy night, O happy night, O happy night, O happy night.

(*b*) IN our *eyes* is the vision of thy *lips*: in our *cup* there is no absence of *wine*.

(*c*) WHEN *thou art away* many *pearls* drop from my eyes: when *moonless* is the night, many *stars* are out.

(*d*) THAT it may gather pearls from the sea of my mind, the pen, like a diver, proceeds head-downwards and feet-upwards.

(*e*) SAID I: "Thy life is a tree and its fruit is tyranny." "Eat then the fruit of the tree of life," she replied with a smile.

(*f*) I desire separation, for union involves the risk of parting: better to be in trouble than in fear of impending trouble.

(*g*) THE favour of a stranger, though great, seems small: the favour of a friend, though small, seems great.

(*h*) MAY thy day be a month, thy month a year, thy year a century: thy enemy's century a year; his year, a month; his month, a day.

(*i*) THE world hath no basis, O cup-bearer, pass the bowl round to *Kāhī*—to the *straw* drifting on the wind like a thing without basis.

(*j*) BORNE on the waves of the sea of his tears, *Kāhī* drifts like *straw*.

'URFĪ

'Urfī *means* "well-known"; *and* mubārak *means* "auspicious." *Seeing the poet-laureate Fayḍī, son of* Mubārak, *playing with a puppy, "what may the name of this young master be?" asked 'Urfī, to which Fayḍī replied*: "*his name is* 'urfī (well-known)," *whereupon 'Urfī replied*, "mubārak bāshad" *his name is* auspicious; *his name is* Mubārak.

'Urfī died in 999/1590 at the early age of 36; and his poetry, like Fayḍī's, enjoys great popularity in Turkey and India.

LII

THE lovers offer their heads at the dust of her feet: to obtain this ransom, they court martyrdom willingly.

God knows that if my sin be nothing but this love, the sins of all Muslims and non-Muslims will be forgiven because of this "sin" of mine.

The patient of love cannot remain bound in chains in a land which is the cure for patients.

The mendicant of the street of love contemptuously turns aside his gaze from that Royalty which the shadow of the Phoenix confers.

How thankful we shall be to Thee if the saints ascribe our faults not to us but to the inexorable decree of Destiny.

I have committed a thousand sins and my prayers are ineffective: but taking pity on their inefficacy I hope God will forgive me.

Produce some virtue (to deserve Divine favour) for I fear that tomorrow you may be forgiven only for the remorse you feel for your sins.

Though '*Urfī* is an alien, he may yet be forgiven because he has participated in discourses on the Beloved.

FAYḌĪ

The Indian-born Fayḍī, Akbar's second poet-laureate, died in 1004/ 1595. He has written a commentary on the Holy Qur'ān consisting of undotted letters throughout: for example, the proper names Yūsuf *(Joseph) and* Fir'awn *(Pharaoh) which contain dotted letters have been replaced by* Waladu'l-'amā *(the son of the Blind one) and* 'Adū-i-Mūsā *(enemy of Moses) which contain no dotted letters.*[1] *Fayḍī's* dīwān *is voluminous and contains all manner of imperishable verses.*

LIII 1

An ambassador of Shāh 'Abbās the Great read out in open darbār the following quatrain :

THE Ethiopian is proud of his African guards; the Turk of his Turkish spears:

Akbar, of his vaults full of gold; but 'Abbās of 'Alī's sword, Dhu'l-fiqār.

Akbar looked at Fayḍī who replied extemporaneously :

PARADISE is proud of its stream, Salsabīl; the sea, of its pearls; the sky, of its stars.

'Abbās, of 'Alī's sword, Dhu'l-fiqār; but the two worlds are proud of their *Akbar* in *Allāhu Akbar*.

LIII 2

[On Akbar's worshipping of the sun]

BEHOLD the equitable distribution of gifts by Fate! Alexander had a mirror; and *Akbar* has the sun:

The former only saw himself in the mirror; the latter sees God in the sun.

---

[1] When the critics said that such a commentary was an innovation, Fayḍī said that the Islamic formula of faith لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله also consists of undotted letters.

LIII 3

[Chronogram on Ghazālī's death in 980 A.H.]

GHAZĀLĪ was the exemplar of poetry and a born poet.
Intellect gave the chronogram of his death in two ways (literally and numerically):
"The year nine hundred and eighty"=980.

LIII 4

On Akbar's pilgrimage on foot to the tomb of St. Mu'īnu'd-Dīn Chishti of Ajmere].

IF the king goes on foot, there's nothing undignified about it:
On the chessboard also the king moves on foot.

LIII 5

THE greedy fellow is like an oyster which though drowned in a sea of water will nevertheless open its mouth to suck a single drop of water from the April shower.

ANONYMOUS

LIV

LAST night, the Angel of Death humbly complained to God:

"Thy slave is helpless before Jalāl, the physician (of Akbar).
Where I kill one, he kills a hundred.

Either depose him or assign to me some other employment."

NAẒĪRĪ

Naẓīrī, the protege of the nobleman, "Abdu'r-Raḥīm K͟hān K͟hānān was born in Nīs͟hāpūr and died at Aḥmadābād in 1021/1612. Of him says Ṣā'ib : "What is this wild idea, O Ṣā'ib, of becoming Naẓīrī? Even 'Urfī could not compete with Naẓīrī in poetry."[1]

LV

SHE'LL not release from her grasp that heart which she snatched so easily: now I realize the strength of those untested arms.

I am thinking of escape while she, with her artifices, is adding knots to knots unravelled.

The heart longs for a soothing balm but those drunken gazelles are sprinkling powdered musk on our open wounds.

To taste repeated sweetness from those lips is impossible: what is possible is to hear bitter words oft-repeated.

Only to spare her the shame of having accused me falsely I am pleading guilty to sins not committed.

Not knowing her cruelty I am speaking highly of her fidelity, for to withhold praise from one consistently praised is impossible.

Our lyric has won her approval: our ink has not been wasted, O *Naẓīrī*.

---

1 صائب چه خیال است شوي همچعه نظیري
عرفی به نظیري نرسانید سخن را

JAHĀNGĪR and NŪR JAHĀN

When Nūr Jahān shot 4 tigers with 4 bullets without missing a shot, a wit remarked:

THOUGH she be a woman in form, in the ranks of *men* is the place of Nūr Jahān, *the tiger-slaying lady, the Tiger-Slayer's lady* (*i.e.*, the widow of S͟hīr Afg͟ān).[1]

LVI 1

[By Jahāngīr]

I am not the nightingale to fill the air with my plaintive cries. I am the moth that dies without uttering a single moan.

[Nūr Jahān's reply]

I am not the moth that dies an instantaneous death. I suffer a lingering death like the candle which burns through the night without uttering a single moan.

LVI 2

[By Jahāngīr]

WHY do old men who have seen the world go about with their backs bent?

[Nūr Jahān's reply]

THEY are searching in dust for the days of their youth.

---

[1] نورجہان گرچہ بصورت زن است
در صف مردان زن شیرافگن است

ṬĀLIB-I-ĀMULĪ

Ṭālib-i-Āmulī became 'Itamādu'd Dawlah's seal-keeper in 1028 A.H.; and in the same year was appointed Jahāngīr's poet-laureate. He died in Kashmīr in 1036/1627. Ṭālib means "desirer" and the Prophet had said : "The world is a carcase; the desirers thereof are dogs." So says Shaydā: [1]

NIGHT and day my patron *Desirer* (*Ṭālib*) runs after the carcase of the world.

Has he forgotten the Prophet's tradition : "The world is a carcase and the *desirer* (*Ṭālib*) thereof is a dog ?"[2]

However, for desirers of pearls of speech here are specimens from the dīwān *of Desirer.*

LVII

(*a*) To 'Itamadu'd Dawlah :

I am thy old and trusted servant; and now thou art entrusting me with thy seal.

When I have thy love, do I need thy seal? Better far to have thy *mihr* (*love*) than to have thy *muhr* (*seal*).

(*b*) To Jahāngīr who had instructed that those who come to his court should have their beards *cut*.

THY assembly is a paradise; and an *uncut* fellow has no place therein.

---

1 الدنیا جیغته و طالبها کلا ب

2 شب و روز مخدومنا طالبا
پی جیفهٔ دنیوی درتگ است
مگر قول پیغمبرش یاد نیست
که دنیا ست مردار و طالب سگ است

(*c*) To Jahāngīr (*hazār* is nightingale; and also commander of One Thousand):

I am *hazār* even if I am not *hazār* : I am the eloquent *nightingale* even if I do not hold the rank of thy *Commander of One Thousand.*

(*d*) How insipid is life ! The world, thou wouldst say, was the mouth of a patient.

(*e*) So completely have I sealed my lips against speech that thou wouldst say the mouth was a wound which has healed.

(*f*) WOULD that the ear had a squint like the eye, so that whatever thou sayest I could hear once more.

(*g*) I am dying of envy. How long shall I see the cup of wine place its lips on thy lips and pour out its heart?

(*h*) BEHOLD His lustre reflected from a *mirror* and a *pool*—from my *heart* and my *eyes.*

(*i*) To the evil words I hear I reply with blessings, like a cloud which takes up salt water and returns the sweet.

(*j*) IF a person is helpless, attend to him all the more : aye, lift with both hands that pitcher whose handle is broken.

SHĀH JAHĀN AND MUMTĀZ MAHAL

Shāh Jahān means "the king of the world"; and with Mumtāz Maḥal by his side, the Emperor was watching from his palace the river Jamnā leap and foam on the stones below. To pay a tribute to his wife, the Emperor said :

LVIII $_1$

> To see the lustre of thy face the river cometh all this way
> "And because of the awe of *the king of the world* (the awe of *Shāh Jahān*) it dasheth its head against the stones"

replied Mumtāz Maḥal.

LVIII $_2$

The task of awakening Shāh Jahān from his night's slumber was entrusted to a maid-servant of Mumtāz Maḥal, who, once misjudging the time, awoke the Emperor long before dawn. Thereupon Shāh Jahān lost his temper, came up to Mumtāz Maḥal and said : "The head must be chopped off." "*Aye*", *replied the Empress,*

> "*The head must be chopped off* of that bird who hath sung before her time, for what does this fairy creature know of dusk or dawn."

SA'ĪDĀ-I-GĪLĀNĪ

Sa'īdā-i-Gīlānī, the artist of the Peacock Throne is the world's solitary poet who was weighed twice in silver: in 1027/1618 by order of Jahāngīr; and in 1042/1633 by order of Shāh Jahān. The weight was equivalent to Rs. 5,000. Sa'īdā died after 1047/1637; and neither his dīwān *nor the throne built by him have survived.*

LIX 1

[In honour of Jahāngīr]

THE nine heavens are an exemplar of thy threshold : aged Time hath become young in thy reign.

Like the sun thy heart bestows largesse without a cause : al lives are meant to be a sacrifice for thy gracious heart.

O king of the age, may the world function according to thy desire—with thy Shāh Jahān *flourishing* (*khurram*; *Khurram*) under thy shadow.

O Shadow of God on earth, the world hath been illumined by thee, for thou art *light* (*nūr*; *Nūr*); and may the light of God always be thy canopy.

There is a double pun on Shāh Jahān's name which was Khurram *and means* flourishing; *and on Jahangīr's name which was* Nūr (Light) *of Religion.*

LIX 2

[In honour of Shāh Jahān]

Not less remarkable than his Peacock Throne was Sa'īdā's lost panegric of 134 couplets consisting of chronograms throughout. It *was divisible into 3 parts, whereof all the hemistichs of the First Part gave 1000 A.H., the date of Shāh Jahān's birth; all the hemistichs of the Second Part gave 1037 A.H., the date of Shāh Jahān's*

first coronation; and all the hemistichs of the Third Part, with one exception, gave 1044 A.H., the date of Shāh Jahān's second coronation on the Peacock Throne. The exception is an hemistich which gives 1043 A.H. *both in words and value, this being the date when Shāh Jahān returned from Kashmīr for his second coronation. Of the original 134 verses, I have discovered and* recovered *only 19 verses, amongst which are the following :*

THE One Incomparable God has caused the world to appear (*1000*) for the sake of Shāh Jahān, the king of the world (*1000*).

By his justice, bounty and benevolence, the emperor of the globe (*1000*): learned, exalted, patron of scholars and a conqueror (*1000*).

May he be king for a thousand years (*1000*), since he makes in the circuit of the globe a hundred thousand lives happy (*1000*).

With a successful bid he ascended the throne in Akbarābād (*1037*), assisted by the Omniscient, Beneficent Lord (*1037*).

It was the year one thousand and forty-three of the Flight (*1043*), when he came to Delhi with the halo of royalty and a mighty army (*1044*).

A thousand thanks to God, the beauty of the world has revived (*1044*) with the early glory of the throne of multi-coloured gems (*1044*).

With the throne of the king of the age, the world of a hundred hues (*1044*) has stripped all other beauty and colour from the land and times (*1044*).

With the terror of thy mace and spear always does the heart of the enemy (*1044*) tremble underground like a pulsating vein (*1044*).

For this reason is thy foe's head like a black stone (*1044*), because it always provides a whetstone for thy spear (*1044*).

QUDSĪ

Ḥājī Muḥammad Jān Qudsī, died 1056/1646, migrated from Meshed to Shāh Jahān's court and in 1045 A.H. received Rs. 5,500, his body-weight in silver, for an ode depicting the cool courage of Prince Awrangzīb in an elephant-fight. Qudsī was a courtier par excellence : *notice, for example, this fine specimen of much original thinking.*

LX 1

[From the unpublished Ẓafar-Nāmah, a poetical history of Shāh Jahān' reign]

[On the extermination of the Princes]

HE who knows virtue and vice knows that intriguers ruin the country .

By distrust the country is ruined; 'tis best to pluck from the roots the sapling of mischief.

The heads of political intriguers should be under the earth and the body politic cleansed of all impurities.

Not all that grows from the body has to be preserved: toe-nails and finger-nails have to be paired.

Will the tree of desire yeild good fruit if it is not pruned of its superfluous boughs?

With a double-edged sword 'tis best to strike off that head which is the source of dynastic strife.

Today the eaglet emerges from the egg; and tomorrow it begins to prey.

Bulāqī, Ṭahmūrath, Shahryār; and with the three of them, Hūshang and Garshāsp.

Were at Lahore under the surveillance of Yamīnu'd-Dawlah.

And when Khidmat Parast Khān brought to Lahore the warrant for their execution

How that statesman executed the warrant—I know that you know. Why say what he did?

'Tis obvious to every man of common sense that Kingship knows no kinship.

And no thinker can ever accept a partner for God or the monarch.

If thou dost admit that the King is the Shadow of God on earth, it follows that the One God cannot cast two shadows.

The King's mind was relieved of anxiety (for the public weal), when the thicket was purged of its tiger-cubs.

LX 2

The best throne constructed by man was perhaps the Peacock Throne; and inside this throne, inscribed in enamel by order of Shāh Jahān were the following 20 verses of Qudsī's—gems written in gems!

ALL-HAIL the auspicious throne of the king, completed by divine grace!

For its construction Heaven melted, first of all, the gold of the sun.

By the Emperor's order the blue of the sky went to the enamelling of the throne.

Of what use are jewels and gold save to embellish this throne? For this purpose were the sea and the mine created.

Its priceless rubies have made pale the ruby lips of sweethearts.

To form its base, the crown and the ring have been carrying gems willingly a whole lifetime.

To make this throne, the world was depleted of its gold, the earth, of its treasures.

If the sky could reach the base of the throne, it would offer the sun and the moon as gifts.

The nobleman who rubs his head against the base of the throne is raised one step above the sky.

Its decoration is the tribute of the sea and mine: its shadow is like the shelter of the throne of God.

Glittering with multi-coloured gems whereof each one is a lantern to light the world.

The floral gems of its panels shine like the light of God on Mt. Sinai.

Despairing of reaching the throne, Jam (shīd) has lent the gem (of his ring) to decorate the leg of the throne.

With the lustrous rubies and pearls of the throne, the dark night can provide a hundred skies with stars.

Because it kisses the feet of Shāh Jahān (when he sits on it) has the value of the throne ascended to Heaven.

The world-bestowing king whose fortune is ever in the ascendant spends the income of a (whole) world on a single throne.

It is only the power of God who hath raised the Heavens and the Heavenly Throne which could construct such a throne.

Till the world exists, Shāh Jahān (King of the world) shall retain his seat on the throne.

A throne like this is his proper seat: the tribute of the Seven Climes lies at his feet.

When the tongue wanted to utter a chronogram, the mind suggested—*the throne of the just Emperor* (*Awrang-i-Shāhinshāh-i-'Ādil*) *1044*.

LX 3

ON the day of judgment everyone shall come with this record in his hand: I shall also be there with my sweetheart's portrait tucked under my arms.

Qudsī, how shall the bargain be struck? He, with the cash of forgiveness in His hand; I, with my load of sins, tucked under my arms.

ABŪ ṬĀLIB KALĪM

The Persian immigrant Abū Ṭālib Kalīm, died 1061/1651, was Shāh Jahān's poet-laureate.

LXI 1

[On the beheading of the Rohilla leaders Sea (*Daryā*) and Ornament (*Payrā*) in 1040 A.H.]

WHEN *Sea* vanished, *Ornament* also lost his head: Thou wouldst say the head of *Ornament* was a *bubble of the sea* (*Sea*).

LXI 2

[On the weighing ceremony of Shāh Jahān]

THE balance which has attained equipoise with His Majesty's weight will hardly lower its beam even for the two worlds.

With the good fortune which the balance hath attained, it would befit the sun if it were to change its mansion of exaltation from the Leo to Libra.

Until in the balance of actions the counterpoise of virtue can never be vice

May, in public esteem, thy enemy's scale continue to *mount* with the *weight* of his sins !

LXI 3

When Shāh Jahān was re-crowned on the Peacock Throne in 1044 A.H., Kalīm produced an ode of 63 couplets for which he received Rs. 5,500, his body-weight in silver. The award works out to six gold pieces per couplet: even so there are not 6 men in the world today who know that these 63 verses do exist. Why mourn for lost gems when such is our indifference to the gems which remain?

Auspicious is the advent of New Year's day synchronizing with the 'Eīd of Ramaḍān (first Shawwāl): what flowers of joy have been showered on the (new) year and the (new) month!

At the festival of joy, there are two cups in the hands of the cup-bearer: aye, two crescent moons are necessary to enjoy the synchronism of the two 'Eīds.

In the eyes of the people of the capital, a third 'Eīd is the dust of the cavalcade of Shāh Jahān, who is a world of glory.

Nawrūz receives 'exaltation' on such an 'Eīd when the King takes his seat on the throne of absolute monarchy.

In praise of his throne, studded with gems, I am producing pearls of speech: God grant (him) Noah's length of life and continuity of speech (to me).

Rubies from thousands of Ceylons and hundreds of Badakhshāns did the throne obtain as a gift ere it unveiled its beauty.

The light of its rubies mingling with the lustre of diamonds is like the reflection of illuminations in crystal water.

Its antique emeralds are greener than fresh grass: who considers a combination of opposites impossible?

The gold of the throne would have melted with the five of its rubies—were it not for the water of its lustrous pearls !

With the fire of its rubies can be lighted a lamp, inextinguishable by water or any gust of wind.

(The throne) hath no price but whatever else thou desirest it has: dignity, majesty, glory, grandeur, grace and beauty.

LXI 4

[On Shāh Jahān's conquest of Balkh in 1056 A.H.]

God has given him the two worlds, what is Balkh? 1056.
This is the date of His Majesty's conquest.

(*a*) WE have no knowledge of the beginning and end of the world: the first and last pages of this ancient book have fallen out.

(*b*) The way of the world is not worth seeing a second time: not a man looked back when he left this heap of dusts

(*c*) If walking without eyes is impossible how, when we have closed our eyes to the world, do we walk out of it

(*d*) What is this difference in writing if the hand of the same scribe has written all our scrolls of destiny?

(*e*) Thanks to the king so sound is his sleep that the watchman needs a watchman.

(*f*) Were everyone to receive his due share of merit, the pearl would acquire all the waters of the ocean.

(*g*) The prohibitionist drinks to your eyes for *they* have ruined the taverns.

(*h*) I am dying of grief in the very midst of redressers of grief, like a ship burning at sea.

(*i*) Thou comest soon and yet thou comest late: shouldst thou come sooner than soon what would happen?

DĀRĀ SHUKUH

Prince Dārā was beheaded for his religious views on the 30th August 1659. But the Secular Republic of India will invest his name with a halo of glory and prescribe the verses which the Mullās had proscribed.

LXII 1

WAS not the Father of mankind disowned by Satan? Did not Ḥusayn (ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj) say, "*I am the Truth*"[1] and go to the gallows?[2]

'Tis the evil and malicious spirit of the Mullās which has tormented every saint and prophet.

LXII 2

DOST thou desire to be credited with insight? Abandon then the worldly state for the ecstatic.

Thou becomest not a theist by saying, "He is One" : the mouth is not sweetened by saying, "How sweet!"

LXII 3

THE gnostics are always in a new ecstatic state: they are religious leaders, not followers.

Lions eat only on what they have preyed: the fox eats the carcase abandoned in the sun.

---

[1] *i. e.*, "I am God" "The idea of the God-Man," says Prof. Nicholson, "was endemic and always likely to become epidemic in Persia."

[2] In 922 A.D.

LXII 4

THE gnostic will irradicate thy heart and soul: he will make a garden of the thorns plucked from the feet.

The perfect man will purge all defects from everyone : one burning candle will light a thousand candles.

LXII 5

WITHOUT death can thy name be immortal? Without a servant can the master be noble?

'Tis the relative which menifests the Absolute: the master is master because of the servant.

LXII 6

DEATH hath no sting for the mystic: the awakened heart fears no sleep.

If thy soul hath abandoned thy body, what matters? When the skin becomes old, the snake casts it off.

ZIBU'N-NISA

"I have no companion save my shadow and even he deserts me at night"[1]*—such was the lot of Mughal Princesses forced by etiquette to remain unmarried. Addressed to a cascade in the palace are these two verses of Zibu'n-Nisa, daughter of Awrangzīb.*

LXIII 1

OH waterfall for whose sake art thou mourning? For whose sake art thou hanging thy head down in grief?

And what manner of pain was it that like me through the lifelong night thou didst dash thy head on the ground and weep?

LXIII 2

[Repartees]

(*a*) "THE Chinese mirror is broken and gone", said an attendant penitently, to which the Princess supplied the antiphony, "All's well : an object of vanity and self-seeing is gone."

(*b*) "Rarely has a piebald (half black half white) pearl been seen" was a stiff hemistich to complete. "Unless it be the tears of a damsel with collyrium in her eyes" remarked Zibu'n-Nisa.

---

1 This verse is by Suhaylī :

بروز بیکسي جز سایهٔ من نیست یار من

ولي آن هم ندارد طاقت شبهای تار من

(c) "A form dressed in green appears under the blue vault of heaven", said 'Āqil Khān who was courting the Princess to which she replied, "Neither force nor gold nor guile will bring her to thee by heaven"—and then she added quoting Sa'dī, "Why should the *wise man*, '*Āqil*', commit an act which brings repentance in its train?"[1]

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1 چرا کاري کند عاقل که باز آید پشیمانی

END OF MUGHAL POETRY: BĪDIL

With Bīdil, 1054-1133/1644-1720, ends the Section on Mughal Poetry. Born in Patna, died in Delhi, Bīdil lived chiefly a free life and his works, which are very popular in Afghānistān, are said to comprise 90,000 verses !

LXIV 1

I have heard that the saint of the times *Bāyazīd* was holding converse with Love one night

Saying, "what gift worthy of acceptance can a good-for-nothing fellow like me bring unto thee, O God ?"

To which the Lord of Glory replied: "The two worlds of perfection are a footstool here,

For prayers and devotional practices of whatever kind they be, the unblemished Kingdom of God needs them not.

No commodity other than defect is required: thy perfection here hath no buyer at all.

But the broken stuff, the more broken it is, the higher is its value at this threshold.

Thy brokenness here will be stripped of its brokenness, for *this* sea of bounty is a fracture-restorer from one end to the other."

The illimitable ocean which creates the elegance of pearls needs naught from the waves save their breaking.

Infrangibility goes not well with the structure of the wave, for breakage is the beginning and end of the wave.

The vernal cloud sheds tears on that rose which did not acquire the state of breaking.

LXIV 2

For the dead also there is worry, arising from the impending day of judgment : how difficult it is to relax !

LXIV 3

Never did a bubble like me arise from this pearl-producing sea : the possessors of heart are everywhere but he who never owned a heart—a *bī dil Bīdil*—where is he ?

ANONYMOUS

LXV

Election of Nādīr Shāh to the Ṣafawī throne is given by the chronogram الخير في ما وقع *, 1149 A.H. (=1736 A.D.), meaning*: "it is alright *what has happened" But the converse* لا خير في ما وقع, "it is all wrong *what has happened" also gives the same date; and a wit supplied the verse:*

> We abandoned all hope of life and property in the year:
> "*it is alright what has happened.*"

Whereupon as the culprit was not discovered, Nādīr put several poets to the sword.

ṢABĀḤĪ

LXVI

Chronogram *of Accession of Ja'far Khān to the Throne of Shīrāz*, 1199 A.H. (*1784-85*):—

THE pen of Ṣabāḥī wrote: "*From the Royal Palace 'Alī Murād went out and in came Ja'far Khān.*"

Royal Palace (قصر سلطاني) *is equal to 550*; Alī Murād (علي مراد) *is equal to 355*; went out *is* minus; in came *is* plus; *and* Ja'far Khān (جعفر خان) *is equal to 1004. Therefore* "550—355+1004," =*1199 is the chronogram.*

QURRATU'L-'AYN

These fine poems of the beautiful heroine Qurratu'l-'Ayn, otherwise known as Ṭāhirah are addressed to the Bāb (the originator of the Bābī-Bahā'ī religion) for whose sake she suffered martyrdom in 1268/1852.

LXVII 1

I'D explain all my grief, dot by dot, point by point—if heart to heart we talk and face to face we meet.

Wherefore, to catch a glimpse of thee, I am wandering like the breeze, from house to house, door to door, place to place and street to street.

With separation from thee, the blood of my heart gushes out from my eyes, torrent after torrent, river after river, stream after stream, sheet after sheet.

An aching heart has woven thy love within the pattern of my soul, stitch by stitch, strand by strand, thread by thread and pleat by pleat.

LXVII 2

WHAT did youth bring and old age take away? A moon of fourteen and wine more than forty.

A moon of fourteen ! One look at whom banished all sleep from the mind, all rest from the heart.

A wine more than forty ! One drop from which he who died did not drink, he who drank did not die.

From the same decanter the cup-bearer of the times pours out the clear clear wine to thee, the dregs and lees to me.

Thousands are his devotees but only one[1] removed the dust of all (other) attachments from the heart.

---

[1] Qurratu'l-'Ayn herself.

To enter the field of love is no pastime for out of a hundred thousand entrants only one remained[1] with feet unshaken (till the end).

Prayers from (this) parrot (of songs) and from the braggart, pretensions: who carries off the ball of victory from the field, let us see!

LXVII 3

[To Nāṣiru'd Dīn Shāh]

FOR thee, the kingdom and pomp of Alexander; for me the ways and habit of a nun: if that is good, thou art welcome to it; if this is bad, it is good for me.

[1]Qurratu'l-'Ayn herself.

QĀ'ĀNĪ

Ḥabīb Qā'ānī was born at Shīrāz in 1222/1807 and died in Ṭihrān in 1270/1853. Though the melody of his verses is lost in a translation, the originality of concept remains.

LXVIII [1]

[In praise of the Creator]

O incomparable One, Thou art so revealed that Thou art hidden from sight:[1] now my statement that Thou art hidden becomes obvious and true.

Sometimes I say, "Thou art revealed"; sometimes I say "Thou art concealed" : neither this nor that art Thou or rather both this and that art Thou.

To him who sees Thee with the outer eye, Thou art concealed; to him who sees Thee with the inner eye Thou art revealed.

Howsoever much certainty may seek, howsoever much imagination may conceive, Thou'lt never be comprehended by certainty, Thou'lt never be conceived by imagination.

Thou art the commentator of an expression which no one knows; Thou art the interpreter of a tongue which no one speaks.

Explanation, meaning, words and expression Thou art not; but in reality Thou art the explanation of all ideas, words and expressions.

If with the truth-seeing eye a researcher looks deeply into the matter, he will find Thee concealed in every drop of water like the illimitable ocean.

---

[1]God reveals Himself in phenomena but people get so rapt up with phenomena that they do not proceed to the Creator of phenomena—wherefore God remains hidden. See Jāmī's *Lawā'iḥ*, XVI.

Were a person to see the reflection of the sun in a pool of water could he say that the mansion of the celestial sun is a pool of water?

And yet were he to say: "'twas not the sun which I saw in the pool of water", he'd be condemned by every thinker for disbelieving the evidence of the eye.

LXVIII $_2$ [1]

THE drizzle from the cloud, the breath of the breeze, the flash of lightening and the roar of thunder have taken hold of the garden, meadow, hill and valley.

The earth, with the white rose; the air, with fog; the meadow, with flowers; the hill, with verdure are like the feathers of the pelican, the eye of the falcon, the comb of the hoopoo and the wings of the parrot.

With the cloud, canomile, anemone and royal basil, thou'lt find the air black, the earth white, the meadow red and the lawn green.

Where grows the rose and the lawn is laid and the box-tree casts its shade and the brook runs, walk with a gay step, seek thy wish, drink a draught and drain the cup.[2]

Especially in the company of a sweetheart lovely, jovial, charming and careless; fluent, sweet-voiced, ensnaring and artful.

With her love, like the pomegranate, fire, snake and dragon, my breast is split, my heart inflamed, my body prostrate, my stature bent.

Even so she gives me joy for all through the year, month, day and night, with will, cheer, heart and soul she chants the praise of the king.[3]

---

1 Ode in honour of Nāṣiru'd-Dīn S͟hāh Qāc͟hār, 1848-1896 A.D.

2 All the words in this verse are monosyllables.

3 All monosyllables.

The ornament of the crown, throne, religion and State, *Nāṣiru'd-Dīn Shāh* who seeks name, pursues his desires, scatters silver, gives gold as a gift.

On the day (of battle) when the ear, brain, heart and soul crack with the roar of the drum, the speed of the horse, the head of the mace and the blade of the sword

And calamity becomes tongs; the body, iron; the spear, fire; the earth, furnace; the axe, hammer; the shield, anvil; the breath, bellows; and death, blacksmith

Mounted on a steed, agile, clever, swift and strong—an earth-tearing, land-pounding, non-stopping charger

—its haunches, hoofs, legs, breast, shoulders, waist : heavy hard, slender, wide, broad and thin—

In a single charge, attack, fight and fray, thou dost overthrow 200 heroes—elephants, lions, tigers and dragons in combat.

O king, with pain, grief, sorrow and anguish, *Qā'ānī's* back is a harp, his body, guitar; his breath, lute; and his heart a flute

To praise, extol, thank and describe thee is beyond him quite, even if he had the sea for ink, the elm for a pen, the sky for a sheet and the globe for a scroll.

LXVIII 3

A vile tyrant[1] (Hājī Mirzā Āqāsī) has been replaced by the just (premier) Taqī in whom pious people take pride.

Thou hast exercised thy weighty judgment in strengthening the defences of the country and religion with a ring of steel guns.

Fort-smashing, battle-line-breaking guns emitting smoke from their mouths even as flames and smoke emerge from the jaws of the fiend (Ahrīman).

---

[1] Before his fall, he was the non-pareil and paragon of virtue, according to Qā'ānī himself.

The black worms[1] in the belly emerge with a red face. What face? The herald of death. Which worms? A brood of snakes.

The worms in its belly all change to red-faced snakes[2], leaping from its throat like snakes from their caves.

I have not seen a dragon like this, with a body of steel and a heart of fire, creating havoc with its flames in the ranks of the enemy.

LXVIII[4]

[On the attempted assassination of Nāsiru'd-Din Shāh]

Towards the end of Shawwāl (1268/1852) the King went out riding for a shoot with the sky in his reins and the sun in his stirrups.

All of a sudden, three fellows emerged from a cover and fired bullets at His Majesty.

I'll not say hereafter that a hit is better than a miss, for the evil shots which miss the target are better than a world of hits.

A mosquito biting the elephant! A drop of water competing with the Nile! This is utterly amazing.

A dragon's task is to safeguard treasure: have you heard of a dragon trying to plunder the treasure?

I had often heard of meteorites being hurled at the devils but I had never heard of the devil hurling meteorites.

I had often heard of the male eagle attacking the vile crow but not of the vile crow attacking the eagle.

If the tiger attacks the wild dogs 'tis not strange; but passing strange it is that the wild dogs should attack the tiger.

---

1 *i.e.*, gunpowder.

2 *i.e.*, flames.

LXVIII$_5$

Qā'ānī describes a dialogue between an old man and a child both of whom stammer and stutter. Says the old man to the child :

WITH tha-tha-thy tresses my da-da-day's night
And with tha-tha-thy face, my na-na-night's day.
Ay zi zulfat ṣa-ṣa-ṣubḥam sha-sha-shām-i-tārīk
Way zi chihrat sha-sha-shāmam ṣa-ṣa-ṣubḥ-i-rawshan

The child thinks the old man is imitating his infirmity and so is very angry and abusive:

A ba-ba box on the ear I shall gi-gi-give you
If you stu-tu-tu-tter and stammer like me.
Mi-mi-Khwāham mu-mu-mu shti bi-ka-kallat bizanam
Ki biyuftad ma-ma-maghzat ma-mīyān-i-da-dihan

Then the old man explains that his stammering is natural, not assumed, whereupon the two are reconciled,

For I stu-tu-tu-tter and stammer like you
While you sta-ta-ta-tammer and stutter like me.
Ma-ma-man ham ga-ga-gungam ma-ma-mithl-i-tu-tu-tu
Tu-tu-tu ham ga-ga-gungī ma-ma-mithl-i-ma-ma-man.

LXVIII$_6$

To give a poetical explanation for a natural fact is a rare device, for example, the Urdū poet Anīs says that water had descended to the bottom of the well to escape the scorching heat of Karbalā; and a Persian poet tells his sweetheart :

I Set thy beauty against the beauty of the moon in the scales of thought. The pan containing the moon flicked right up to heaven (so the moon is in heaven) and thou didst remain on earth (so thou art on earth).[1]

---

[1] Ḥusn-i-mah rā bā tu sanjīdam bimizān-i-qiyās : pallah-i-mah bar falak shud; tu bimandī bar zamin.

To return to Qā'ānī who was once going with Nāṣiru'd-Dīn Shāh through the street of the coppersmiths in Ṭihrān. Seeing a comely lad beating and making copper vessels, the Shāh said in verse, "round the coppersmith's face hath settled the dust of coal";[1] *and since copper vessels are beaten in Persia during a lunar eclipse to scare away the dragon which has swallowed the moon; and since in literature, the moon is a synonym for a lovely face, the poet at once supplied the antiphony*:

THE sound of the copper vessel ascends to heaven for the moon is eclipsed.[2]

1 Bigird-i-'ānd-i-misgar nishastah gard-i-zughāl.

2 *Ṣadā-i-mis bifalak mīrawad kih māh giriftast.*

NĪM TĀJ KHĀNUM

The northern provinces of Persia were raided by the Turks during the First World War and in the massacres at Urūmiyyah, Salmās and Rasht, Nīm Tāj Khānum lost her father and other relatives whereupon she produced this spiritem poem.

LXIX

IF Irānians desire the *Royal Splendour* (of the Sāsānians)[1], let them search for a *Kāvah*[2] first of all.

A great man with the determination is wanted : may be with *his* heroic aid a solution is found to our problems.

[Islām expands so for that] congregational prayers are held in Andalusia[3] when ablutions are performed with *blood* in the field of Cadesia.[4]

A palace with a broken foundation cannot be repaired by merely painting and perfuming its exterior.

By your lack of zeal the veil of Īrān's modesty has been torn to shreds : fetch it here to be darned by women.

Behold the procession of the women of Rasht—how with dishevelled hair they are airing your faults one by one.

In the market, street and street-corner are the virgins of Urūmiyyah with unveiled face, begging openly.

---

[1] *Farr-i-Kāyānī* or Royal Splendour was the symbolized Divine Right (called a "Ram" by Firdawsī) by virtue of which the Sāsānians wore the Persian crown.

[2] The rise of the national Kāyānian dynasty is due to this Īrānian hero who defeated Ḍaḥḥāk.

[3] Southern Spain.

[4] This verse is Pan-Islamic for the Persians were *defeated* by the Arabs at Cadesia in 636 A.D. Thereafter the tide of Islām continued to rise till it had swept over the whole of North Africa, Spain and Portugal.

In the tract of Salmās many are the women who, with bleeding hearts, are using the blood of their brethren as a rouge for the face.

Another Noah and a new flood of his are needed to wash all the stains of your [acts of] dishonour.

Political freedom is tied to the *hilt* of the sword: only to *it* resort those who are men.

It is the law of creation that every luxurious and ease-loving nation should go down and be held in contempt.

'ISHQĪ

Muḥammad Riḍā 'Ishqī was the editor of a paper, Qarn-i-Bīstum*: born in 1312/1894 he was murdered in* 1342/1924, *the date of death being the chronogram* 'Ishqi-i-Qarn-i-Bīstum ['Ishqī of the Twentieth Century].

LXX

BEHIND the hill the sun had sunk to its rest; the sprawling city of Ṭihrān was no longer clearly visible from afar; the world was hovering between day and night; half-red half-yellow was the dusk—now like a flag of Revolution; anon like a curtain of gold!

Even as the sun went down behind the hill, the [pan of the moon rose up and appeared through the interstices of the trees. And lo, without waiting for the night, the sky became all illuminations; and the world, irradiated with the beams of the moon, began making the earth a young bride painting its face with silver.

I was seated on a crag and before my eyes, as far as they could see, the landscape was clear. Strange and remote were the thoughts coursing through my mind—to soar into the ethereal blue but alas! Fate had given me no wings as it has to the falcon.

I may have been in this reverie for an hour or two when a village girl appeared from afar. Gracefully was she stepping on the earth like a peacock; and hither and thither was she looking with fright, like suspects afraid of their own suspicions.

Dressed like the virgins of Shimrān, she looked neither urban nor rural: all that beauty should have, she had: more like an angel than a human being, 'twas hard to tell whether she was a woman or a fairy.

[Gently she sat on the meadow by the side of a running brook and parted her locks. As those black tresses fell on either side of her white forehead, her cheeks began to glow in the light of the moon, reflecting its rays like a mirror held before the sun. No defect could be detected in her for all was lovely and worthy of praise.

At that moment I saw a figure approaching: he was a young man, tall and erect; not bad in form and face—I should say he was handsome; simple in dress and up-to-date with cap, trousers, coat and jacket.

"Hullo, Mary, you bit of the moon !" "Alas, who art thou ?" "Fear not, my dear, 'tis I; since when have you been here ?" "Oh darling of my heart why were you so late in coming ?" Then in that moon-lit night, charming as a picture, the young man seated himself beside the girl.

A few minutes later, he slipped a hand into his breast-pocket and pulled out two flasks of red wine—a medicine to end (or rather to increase) their troubles. He filled a cup and gave it to his sweetheart : "haven't I told you a thousand times", she exclaimed, "that I do not drink?"

"Stop this talk, sweetheart, come along, have a drink!" "By God, I'll not." "Drink for God's sake." "No, by God." "Drink, drink, have a drink." "Leave me alone; this bitter disgraceful drink is for thee."

In fine with his persistence he seduced her and paved the way for her fall. He put the glass to the lips of the lass, alas ! and made the *I'll-not-drink-saying* one drink, not a cup or two but many more than four !

Hark ! The cooing of the ringdove comes from the mountain side; the splash of the falling water comes from the cataract; the mournful tinkling of the guitar comes from afar; and mixed with them all comes the murmur of that pair of lovers as their lips meet in kisses after kisses.

When she knew that her father had gauged the extent of her fall, she bought some opium at night and partook it. She lay in death-agony all through the night and passed away at dawn, leaving her old broken-hearted parent one-half of himself with weeping.

In short not a soul came to know what had happened. Drowning his sobs in the noise of the day, her aged father quietly bathed her body, wrapped it in shroud and all by himself prepared for her the nuptial chamber of a grave. O God! how shall Thy vengeance fall on the people of Ṭihrān!"

"Laid out in this dark earth, Mary, O Mary, how well thou art sleeping, Mary, O Mary! Thou hast escaped from the sorrows of the world, Mary, O Mary: sleep soundly then, O unfortunate daughter, O Mary, O Mary. Aye, sleep till eternity, my daughter, in this bed of thine !"

SHŪRĪDAH

For the following impromptu "fragment" the blind poet Shūrīdah of Shīrāz 1857-1926 received from Nāṣiru'd-Dīn Shāh the title of "Orator of the Kingdom."

LXXI

I was ushered into the royal presence and I recited my poem in honour of the King. I heard him say, "Well done!" but my eyes saw not the face of the King.

Even as Muḥammad who went to Heaven on the night of his Ascension and though he heard the voice of God, the face of God he did not see.

ADĪB-I-PĪSHĀWARĪ

Adīb migrated from Pīshāwar where he was born in 1884 to Kābul and thence to Ṭihrān where he died in 1930. *Indian by birth, he is ultra-Persian in thought. Commenting on one of his stiff verses, a critic remarked : "Not one man in a thousand can understand such a verse." "I have written that verse for that one man", was Adīb's reply.*

LXXII_1

I am the triumph of mind over material desires: I have presented the world to the poor in spirit.

Since all possessions are to be left behind, I now think that I own everything.

I have abandoned the world like the son of Mary: neither breakfast nor supper is certain for me.

Bodily comfort brings harm to the soul: what brings harm to the soul I have renounced with contempt.

Since the seed of hope yields the fruit of pain, I never gathered this seed nor sowed it.

I have cleansed the heart of all notes and records; I have obliterated from the mind whatever I wrote on it.

By (accepting only) the evidence of the eye I have freed myself from the grip of rash judgment—for ridiculous were all my conjectures.

Wherefore in the rank of holy intelligences a shining flag I am flying.

LXXII_2

THERE isn't a flower in this lovel· arden which hasn't in store a couple of hundred thorns for the picker.

Give not thy heart to the soft voice of the world: what the world says is not what it does.

Be not lulled by its faith and promises: it hath no regard for faith and promises.

By the arrow of this archer with a drawn bow I know no heart which hasn't been wounded.

Which heart wasn't cleansed from the rust of sorrow but the world didn't make rusty again?

He who complains of an ignoble person is not less ignoble himself.

To become dark as pitch or bright as a lamp—save these two functions the world hath nothing else to do.

Repetition produces fatigue: why isn't thy heart tired of repetition?

Behind this curtain is an august court to which there is no access for me and thee.

Though the mouth of the oyster produces the pearl, the oyster cannot be placed in the class of the royal pearl.

Why should I complain of the injuries inflicted by othe· when all my injuries are from me to me?

In this famous market crowded with buyers, to buy my wares, a buyer there is none.

LXXII$_3$

THE son of the mason in whose hand the mud with which he plays becomes the musk-laden soil of Cathay

Hasn't built a single mud-castle yet but has already ravished with his glances two hundred mansions of the human heart.

ASHRAF

Ashrafu'd-Dīn 1288-1350/1871-1931 was the editor of a Nationalist paper, the Nasīm-i- Shimāl; *and in this poem, beautiful-in the original for the lilt of its lines, he refers to the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 which split Persia into a northern Russian, a southern British and a Central Persian zone. A cartoon in the* Punch *showed the Persian cat sitting uneasily between the Russian bear and the British lion. "I'll pat its head," says the bear to the lion, "and you stroke its tail."*

LXXIII

DROWNED in grief and affliction is the motherland, alas—alas for our country, alas!
Arise, go and fetch the coffin and the shroud, alas—alas for our country, alas!

With the blood of the youths killed for the cause—red is the disc of the moon, alas!
Red like blood is the hill and the dale and the plain, alas—alas for our country, alas!

Where is the spirit of adventure? Where zeal? Where bounty?—And the national movement where?
Coming from the north and the south is a torrent of calamity, alas—alas for our country, alas!

How completely has Islām been squeezed by the aliens—and trodden underfoot!
The Constitutional Government of Īrān lives only in the history of the past, alas—alas for our country, alas!

Some ministers there are whose policy is only to plunder—this is a secret well-known.
Sunk in this viscous mud and morass are the men of learning, alas—alas for our country, alas!

Alas that this pearl-bearing pearl-producing land—should be partitioned, alas!
On all four sides the land is better than the musk of Cathay, alas—alas for our country, alas!

On the gold-plated ornamented dome (of the land)—the owls are sitting
This land is a wasteland now for the kite and the crow, alas—alas for our country, alas!

From the landlords not an atom of cooperation—have the peasents seen:
Their task is to say, "for Ḥasan alas, for Ḥusayn alas"—alas for our country, alas!

Ashraf's lot is to smell only the tulip of sorrow—and to say all the time
"Alas for our country"; "alas for our country"; "alas for our country, alas"—alas for our country, alas!

ʻĀRIF

Abu'l-Qāsim ʻĀrif-i-Qazwīnī 1300-1352/1882-1933 was a leading poet of the Persian Revolution and his dīwān *contains fine ballads set to music. The following* taṣnīf *was recited and sung in Ṭihrān when on December 23, 1911 Īrān submitted to the Russian ultimatum and dismissed the American expert Mr. Morgan Shuster who as Treasurer-General was rapidly putting straight the chaotic finances of Persia.*

LXXIV$_1$

FIE and shame on the house where the guest finds at the table not the menu but a notice to depart, my friend.

Lay down thy life, lay down thy life but suffer not thy guest to go, thy guest to go.

If *Shuster* goes from Īrān, Īrān goes to rack and ruin, my friend

To rack and ruin allow not Īrān to go, young men, allow not Īrān to go.

O life of the body, O soul of the world, O real treasure, O eternal pleasure, *O Shuster*!

May God keep thee here, may God keep thee here; may God, may God, may God keep thee here.

Our cup is full to the brim [and cannot hold another drop]; the thief is out for theft and the brigand for brigandage my friend.

Our history will become the laughing stock of the world if we allow *Shuster* to go from Īrān, from Īrān *Shuster* to go.

O life of the body, O soul of the world, O real treasure O eternal pleasure, *O Shuster* !

May God keep thee here, may God keep thee here; may God, may God, may God keep thee here.

Don't go; though all else may go, heart, head and soul. The eyes of the ill-wisher have turned blind (with rage) because of our unity, my friend.

Thou art *a part* of us, how can we live *apart* from thee, *O Shuster*? Hence this lament of *'Ārif* goes right up to Saturn, right up to saturn it goes.

O life of the body, O soul of the world, O real treasure, O eternal pleasure, *O Shuster* !

May God keep thee here, may God keep thee here; may God, may God, may God keep thee here.

LXXIV$_2$

THE jurisconsult of the city is not in favour of the lifting of the veil for whatever tricks he performs, he performs behind a veil.

Since the explicit text of the Qur'ān is not in accordance with his wishes, he produces an esoteric interpretation which reverses the meaning.

IQBĀL

The great poet-philosopher of Lahore, Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl 1289-1357/1873-1938 is the author of many famous works in Urdu and Persian. His last words were these two verses of Sanā'ī :

DOST thou remember how at the time of thy birth thou wert weeping but all others were laughing?

Live then in such fashion that at the time of thy death thou shouldst be laughing and all else should be weeping.

LXXV$_1$

FOR this reason is my song ardent, bold and plaintive because a spark (of Promethean fire) has fallen on the straw of my being and the morning wind is blowing strong.

Come and sit for a while by my bedside because he whose bowl always remained empty in thy assembly now finds it full to the brim, (but alas!) with the misery of separation.

Love is totally unarmed—save for an axe which pierces the breast of the mountain but remains unsullied with the blood of Parwīz.[1]

Thy veiled hints can crush me, I know, and yet I long for those glances which are bold and fatal.

Both of them (brain and heart) have the same basis, water and clay; and yet, what secret is this—man's brain turns more to earthly objects than his heart?[2]

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1. Farhād was promised the hand of Shīrīn if he would tunnel Mt. Bīsutūn (Behistun) : when he had nearly completed this task, his rival king Khusraw Parwīz, 590-628 A.D., sent him false news of Shīrīn's death whereupon Farhād committed suicide.

2. God dwells in the heart of man, not his brain; nor does the brain help man to understand God, for if God could be comprehended by the intellect, He would cease to be God !

Look at me for in all India you'll not find another person of Brahman stock so familiar with the secrets of Jalālu'd-Dīn of *Rūm*[1] and Shamsu'd-Dīn of *Tabrīz*.[2]

LXXV₂

O THOU who hast increased through me the warmth of sighs and groans, revive through my message this (Islāmic) belt lying dormant for a thousand years.

What wilt Thou not do with our heart when with life-giving wine Thou givest the intoxication of delight to a water-and-clay-made cup?

Make the narrow-hearted bud open its petals to the breeze of my song and revive with my breath the scar concealed in the heart of the tulip.

The gazelle of my thought leaps beyond the bounds of the Moon, Sun and Jupiter. Ensnare it then; why art thou lying in ambush asleep?

O my Lord, preserve the honour of Thy beggar who declines to fill his bowl with the water of streams which are alien.[3]

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1 & 2 See Descriptive Note to No. XXIX.

3 *i.e.*, "I am an original thinker; I have not taken ideas from others."

PARWĪN

Known by a dīwān *and supplement, Parwīn-i-I'tiṣāmī, 1907-1941, the chief poetess of modern Persia has written mainly on the tyranny of the rich and the rights of the poor and down-trodden.*

LXXVI

A boy went to his mother and said 'midst his sobs: "The lads in the street avoid me completely.

For no fault of mine a boy drove me away from his side: no sting could have hurt me more than his jibe.

The lads seem not to like me at all. Was there never a fatherless lad before me?

I never saw a stick of wood burn in our grate; I never saw our lamp burn bright.

What they eat next door is fowl and fish: for the two of us the meal is the blood of our heart.

Everyone laughs at my tattered shirt; did my father never own a penny or a pound?"

The mother smiled and said: "he who mocks at thy poverty knows not the value of the pearls of thy tears.

Ask me not about thy father. A pickaxe, sickle and hatchet—this was all what he had.

Great sacrifice he made to buy this worn-out mat: if sleeveless was his shirt, without a lining was his coat.

For an orphaned child to have wishes and desires is wrong: a bough struck down by stones of hail never bore fruit.

In this vast factory what the weaver of the times has woven for us are just these clothes we are wearing."

BAHĀR

On June 23, 1908 Muḥammad 'Alī Shāh suspended the Persian Constitution; put Mīrzā Jahāngīr Khān, editor of the Ṣūr-i-Isrāfīl *and other nationalists to death; and began an autocratic reign which ended in July 13, 1910 when the sipahdār's troops from Rasht and the Bakhtiyārī troops from Iṣfahān took Ṭihrān and the Shāh abdicated by seeking refuge in the Russian Legation. An important reactionary hanged was Shaykh Faḍlu'llāh of Nūr. "If we were a heavy burden, we are going;if we were unkind, we are going,"*[1] *said he in an extempore verse when the noose was put round his neck.*

The poet-laureate Muḥammad Taqī Bahār of Mashhad, 1886-1951, author of some 30,000 couplets has well reflected in the first two poems given below, the pessimistic and the optimistic sentiments of the people, prevailing before and after the National Victory.

LXXVII 1

[The last couplet in each stanza is by the poet Sa'dī]

BY despotic rule, O king, what is thy aim? For naught but calamity can ensure from such policy.

Give generous aid to the Constitutional Government then shalt thou be adored.

"In generosity is the pre-eminence of man and in prostration before God his exaltation:

Whoever lacks these two qualities better for him not to be than to be."

O king, be generous and break not thy pledges. The punishment of God shall overtake thee

And the trend of events throw dust on thy head. "Dost thou not see how pleasant is the land of Egypt?

1 *Agar bār-i-girānbūdīm raftīm agar nāmihrbān būdīm raftīm.*

And yet 'tis the selfsame dust which fell on the head of Pharaoh and his army."

O king, thy obstinacy and oppression is reducing Īrān to ashes. Today the land has succeeded in getting requital from thee.

The splendour of the light of retribution is not a phenomenon of today : "This disc of a world-illuminating sun is precisely that

Which once shone upon the resting places of the exterminated tribes of the 'Ād and Thamūd."

More than this, O king, apply not the axe to the root of thy tree. Bleed not the nation white and stain not its honour.

Uproot not thyself with feeding thy self . "Lower not thy value by indulging in pleasures lawful and prohibited

If thou hast faith in the Promised Day."

With oppression thou hast reaped clean the crop of the nation; with injustice thou hast revived the old tales of Chingiz.[1]

Does it behove thee to cling to the world after all this talk against thee? "Thou who art revelling in wealth and luxury be not proud of this world

Which is only a halting place wherein permanent residence is chimerical."

Proceed to Tabrīz; see the site of its martyrs; hear the blood-curdling heart-breaking tale of that land

Which ceased not to fight in spite of the agonies it suffered. "Aye, stop and pause on the road thou treadest

For 'tis compounded of the dust of eyes and eye-lashes, cheeks and statures of men."

The King was not sincere and everything went to rack and ruin. O tired nation, plan thy salvation independently;

And approach not this self-conceited king for aid. "When thou liftest thy hand of supplication, lift it before God

Who is generous and clement, merciful and loving."

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1 "Not a hundred persons were left where there had been a hundred thousand"—such was the cruelty of Chingiz Khān died 1226 A.D.

Will this king, steeped in pride and egoism, think of the welfare of the nation? And indeed who is he to put service before self?

We are the adorers of the true God and His divinity "in Whose worship, with hymns and recitations,

All do rise and sit from the Earth to the Pleiades."

The morning star of Constitutional Government has appeared in the sky of perfection. The night of separation is about to end and the dawn of union to break.

All will end well with the help of the Glorious God. "O thou who art living in worry and dire poverty

Be a trifle patient for thy life of torture shall soon be over."

Expect nothing even remotely good from this king for what we see in him is nothing but evil.

And waste not thy advice on him: advice is vice for the vicious. "The advice of *Sa'dī* which is the key to the door of the treasury of Prosperity

None can carry out save the Prosperous."

LXXVII 2

[The original has 12 stanzas whose glory lies in the irreproducible lilt of the lines.]

Those who were pleased to bind us and slay us; to strike with malice at the heart of the land

To deem no perfidy in breaking their vows—could not finally escape the grip of the nation,

From His Holiness the priest[1] to His Highness the king : praise be to God; praise be to God !

Fortune befriended the chiefs of Iṣfahān;[2] truth linked itself with the forces of Gīlān;[3]

The Nationalists converged on the capital of Īrān;[4] the king sought refuge in Legation in Ṭihrān.[5]

Such was the end of the tyrant's tyranny: praise be to God; praise be to God !

1 2 3 4 & 5 All these points are covered in the descripte note on Bahār See *supra*, p. 215.

LXXVII 3

'TIS an awful and dreadful sound—the *booming* of guns and the *yell* of commanders;

Harsher than that is the thunder's *peal* coming from the (dead dark) midnight sky;

More terrible still is the *roar* of a storm in the boundless sea;

More hideous than that, the *rumble* and *blast* of a volcanic eruption;

But of all sounds the most horrible is the nerve-shattering *wail* of a homeless nation!

LXXVII 4

EDWARD *Browne*, the scholar and friend of Īrān whose looks are good, whose thoughts are good, whose nature is good:

If good ever came from the people of England to the people of the East, he alone is the author of that good.

LXXVII 5

[*Sarwa Rawān* (moving cypress) minus the *aw ān* of *Rawān* (*aw ān* means and also) plus *Gūyā* (eloquent) equals *Sarwar Gūyā*, the contemporary Afghān scholar].

FROM the moving cypress (Sarwa R*awān*) I sought thy name it became eloquent (*Gūyā*) *and also left* courteously (when *aw ān* was substracted from Sarwa R*awān*).

DIHKHUDĀ

Equally famous for his fine prose and poetry, for his depth of learning and subtlety of satire is Mīrzā 'Alī Akbar Khān Dihkhudā, 1879-1956 who like Bahār is one of Īrān's Immortals.

LXXVIII 1

[This is the last stanza of an elegy on the martyr, Mirzā Jahāngir Khān mentioned in LXXVII.]

O lad of the Golden Age, when normal conditions are restored;
And happy with the obedience of His creatures God resumes His rule;
And no trace remains of the Garden of Iram[1] or the name of Shaddād,[2] and the mouth of the idle talker (Muḥammad 'Alī Shāh) is stuffed with dust;
Then the martyr (Jahāngīr Khān) who from the blade of the executioner's sword, punished for the fault of speaking the truth;
Drained the cup of Union with God, call to mind!

LXXVIII 2

[On conscience and the Inner Voice] [3]

A wet dog happened to brush by a preacher who was on his way to the House of Prayer whereupon the preacher promptly closed his eyes and said: "God willing, it is only a cat." This proverb is the basis of my poem.

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1 & 2 The Arabian tyrant Shāddād and his Garden of Iram were destroyed by God: by Shāddād, the Shāh and by the Garden of Iram, the Shāh's palace known as the Shāh's Garden, are meant.

3 This is a long mathnawī whereof several verses I have omitted and others I have compressed in prose; and only 28 have I translated.

The censor of religious morals of the city of Shaft who specialized in high living and plain thinking and was all belly from head to foot, found himself still in bed when the cry to prayer was raised. Jealous of maintaining his reputation, he put on speed, bathed, changed and was beating the road remarkably well for his weight when a dog emerged from the runnel wherein it had fallen and shook itself dry against the spurting censor. The *inner voice* seized the opportunity and immediately pressed the claims of religious purity, but the censor, already late for the prayer, was not to be deterred.

"A dog in a runnel of water!" said he, "this is impossible If it is not a fish, it is a duck;

But why no scales, no feathers? It has a bit of a tail! Ah, it is a dolphin.

Which frequents seas and pools which are deep; and rescues drowning men and mercifully brings them ashore.

So they say and well have they said—but knowledge is no good at all without practice.

I had read a detailed description about him and his habits in *Ad-Damīrī*[1] and *Al-Ḥayawān*;[2]

And—Satan be damned for my fading memory—in *Balīnas*[3] and the works of *Aristotle*.

In the *Shifā*[4] also, in the chapter on Animals, *Abū 'Alī* (*Avicenna*)[5] refers to him;

But to evaluate properly, how can a hundred vague reports equal the proof positive of a pair of eyes?"

So argued the preacher (zoologically). And to clinch the argument and leave no room for doubt, he turned his back upon the dog,

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[1] Ad-Damīrī, died 1405 A.D., author of the *Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān*, 2 Vols., Cairo, 1319 A.H.

[2] Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Bahr al-Jāhiz, died 868 A.D., author of the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*.

[3] The magician Balīnās is described in Niẓāmī's *Sikandar Nāmah* as the companion of Alexander the Great and husband of the enchantress Ādhar Humāyūn.

[4] & [5] This famous work of Avicenna, 980-1037 A.D. is a treatise on physics, mathematics, metaphysics etc.

Threw the cloak over his eyes and shrouded in that legacy of five generations,

Closed his eyes and flashed past like an antelope of the plain or a meteor of the sky;

And he rushed into the House of Prayer and a cry went up to the tinkling stars

'The censor, the censor, the pure, the undefiled !' He who says not so be he dumb for ever.

What thou callest Conscience, O Shaykh, what is it save a bag inflated with wind?

When the lion hath fastened his teeth on the goat, dost thou know what Conscience telleth the lion?

It says, "O King of beasts, live long, feed well and be happy

For this silly goat knoweth not that when Your Majesty has justly made a meal of him,

A simple process of digestion will presently transform him into a lion!

This goat-eating on your part, my Lord, is not for the sake of sport: 'tis for the high purpose of lion-making.

Similarly when the lazy lobourer lets his wife die of starvation, Conscience says, "Well done !

For this charming sweetheart in this dismal, dilapidated hut

Had neither bread not blanket—a sorry plight which puts a husband to shame.

Thy manly neglect has ended a double pain—the pain that was hers, the pangs that were thine !"

This Conscience is a past master in producing from the same vat

Shades of pale, yellow, red, purple, black

And with a little effort, even darker than black

So much so that the Kurdish villain coolly said, "If I hadnt killed this fellow, would he then have lived for ever?"

PŪR-I-DĀ'ŪD

Among those who have contributed to purifying the language and the politics of Persia is the great living poet and scholar, Pūr-i-Dā'ūd who celebrates in the following poem the fall of the Qāchār and the rise of the Pahlawī dynasty, 1926 A.D. The original, no doubt was born in a flash, and as regards my translation :

When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw
The line too labours and the verse moves slow.

LXXIX

HARK! A messenger has brought the good news that Aḥmad Shāh of Īrān has been deposed.

And the royal throne cleared of this occupant, the devil of an offender, a brigand and a Turkomān of the Qāchār tribe.

With this happy tidings render thy thanks to God, for we have freed ourselves once more from the ignominy of alien rule.

Because of this tribe and its seven kings of Turkish descent, old Īrān had become a heap of ruins—

An abode of owls. And from that debris was going up to heaven the wail of a people, senseless, homeless, lifeless,

Sad, emaciated, dejected, distracted—the gift of the rule of the Qāchārs.

Save a (crushing) tax naught else from an alien ruler can come; save a (venomous) sting naught else from a snake and a scorpion can come;

Save harm and loss what else from a brigand or a thief can come? The strength and skill of a lion from a jackal cannot come;

The justice and splendour of Parwīz from the Qāchār cannot come: from the rose-bush the rose you'll get and thorn from the thorn.

This dynasty was threatening our national existence: with its heavy load, the beams of our house were sagging.

Universal became fooling, idling, drinking, begging, joking, sinning, bluffing;

Sufīism, materialism, egoism; and the urge to steal, lie, cheat, hate and slay.

Name a single king from this House who was just; name one who was capable, wise and illustrious.

Can a ravished land boast of gold and silver? Or guns, troops, mail, hood and shield?

In a parched and arid land where is verdure and fruit? Where field, where harvest, where wheat, where granary?

Sardār Sipah cleared the house of its alien occupant. This son of the land soothed the bereaved motherland.

He struggled like a man and charged from all sides till he had unseated the Qāc̲h̲ār from the Peacock Throne.

He gave a new Constitution and a new social order: may the Hurmuz in heaven be his protector on earth.

ṢŪRATGAR

This magnificent elegy is by the celebrated poet and professor of Ṭihrān University, Luṭf 'Alī Ṣūratgar on the great Orientalist, Mīrzā Mūḥammad Khān-i-Qazwīnī, 1874-1948, aptly called the second al-Bīrūnī for his critical, brilliant and vast contributions to Persian learning.

LXXX

ALAS, the shining sun has set and the dust of grief has settled on Īrān.

From the thumb-stall of the times, an arrow has been shot whose shaft has settled in our heart and soul.

A savant has hid his face in the earth or rather the glowing sun has sunk in the sea of extinction.

Literature is standing at his grave in mourning; science is sitting at his tomb in sorrow.

With his death, the writer has broken his pen and the speaker has torn his collar.

'Tis strange, O savant, that the earth should never have seen thee, even for a while, in bodily comfort.

From Īrān had come down to us a vast store of learning, all covered with layers of dust.

To preserve that treasure, thou didst sit at thy desk, day and night, as a sentinel.

The world was resounding with thy illustrious name while thou wert residing in a corner of Ṭihrān, broken in health.

At thy table, to pick up thy crumbs, a group of Muslims and non-Muslims would always gather

Sitting with heads bowed low, knowing who was the man at the head of the table.

(In my mind's eye) I am seeing a grand conference holding its session in Paradise with Khwājah Ḥāfiz in the chair.

Sa'dī of silvery tongue and powerful pen, the producer of pearls of speech, is there

As also that world-champion, the encomiast of virtue and heroism, [Firdawsī] of Khurāsān.

Likewise Rūdakī is in attendance with the harp resting on his bosom and his head reclining on the pomegranate-breast of a maiden, fair as an idol.

And that songster of Sīstān (Farrukhī) appears gay and smiling, seated next to (Mas'ūd-ī)-Sa'd-i-Salmān.

And Rābī'a, the daughter of Ka'b, looks charming with her face unveiled and a poetess by his side, Mahsatī.

On whose glowing cheeks, the beads of perspiration, thou wouldst say, appear like rain-drops on the petals of the rose

In a conference of such illustrious persons I can recognize thee as the lamp which is lightening the assembly.

If from this garden of earth thou hast withdrawn thy face, 'tis to go buoyantly to thy seat in the garden of Paradise.

There, O namesake of the Prophet, I am seeing thee seated by the Prophet's side, thy ailments gone and thy face wreathed in smiles.

Perpetually alive art thou (O Qazwīnī) for thy name glitters like a diadem on the forehead of Īrān.

HEKMAT

Born in 1892, 'Alī Asghar Hekmat is the living glory of Īrān; and in spite of the heavy duties he has had to perform as minister, diplomat, educationalist and litterateur, how lightly moves his pen as in this fine poem on the Bride of the Falls of Niagara.

LXXXI

COME and listen to one of the hidden undivulged mysteries of America(n life).

Many have written on (ritual) secrets but no one ever bored a pearl like me.

If wealth keeps the heart burning, it also keeps the lamp of science and industry alight.

In America good luck is hard work; in America the star of learning is in the zenith of perfection.

All that land, in ancient times, was owned by the tribe of Red Indians:

Their complexion, like copper; their hearts, like iron; their caps, of feathers; their mail-coats, of leather.

If you go to Buffalo City, you'll find a hundred relics from this tribe.

If you break your journey there, you'll find a marvellous waterfall:

Nature reveals the hand of creation or more precisely, a river does it

For it produces a strange torrent whose surging waters

assing o'er a rock hurl themselves in a roaring cataract.

From the falling waters rises a mist but who ever saw a mist rise from water?

And so, like magic, the air wraps the landscape in a veil of cloud and mist.

In that delicate water-created mist, the cataract hides the beauty of its face—

Like a silver-bodied bride with a silken veil thrown o'er the head.

The bouncing water-drops, crystal clear, like particles of prism

Receive the solar light and release it in hundreds of rainbows.

That torrent flowing over the hard rock is in the form of a horseshoe—

A jewel of a horseshoe dropped from heaven to glitter in the crown of the Earth.

And the swift waters of the Niagara River course perpetually through that shoe for the sake of the horse of the times!

But the Niagara has also a feast for the ear: 'tis a wondrous tale, the legacy of the Red Indian tribe from its ancestors.

Each year when the Red Indians see their granary and orchard full of corn and fruit

They turn to the Supreme God to express their gratitude,

Who, according to their primitive belief, conceals Himself in a mist.

God shines through a veil so that the lustre of His face may not set the world aflame—

For unclothed Reality is destructive wherefore the Water of Life lies in darkness—

However, as God hides His face in a mist the savage turns to the mist to seek his God therein

And render Him thanks for favours received, for though a savage is a savage, he is not ungrateful.

But thou who claimest to be cultured and civilized, what is thy record of thanks to the Creator?

Loaded from head to foot with divine favours, how, oh how, dost thou discharge the dues of gratitude?

On an auspicious day, in the season of autumn, two hundred maidens assemble in a plain—

Virgins with a moon-bright face, carrying hundreds of bunches of wild flowers.

And making every heart bleed with the magic of their dark, dark eyes.

Suddenly a soothsayer appears on the scene, binds his girdle and opens his arms;

And like a cunning selector lets fly an arrow in the air. But what an arrow? An arrow of Fate and Destiny.

When that arrow completes its flight in the air and falls at the feet of a maiden,

From all sides the people rush towards her with congratulations,

Hailing her as *the Bride of the Falls* for whom the groom is anxiously waiting.

With floral branches a boat is prepared—its sails, the creepers of the white rose.

To that floating nuptial chamber the bride is gloriously led

And the moment she coyly takes her seat therein, she is gone—gathered by the Falls into the loving arms of *the God in the Mist*.

M 21DPD/63—GIPF